

*TO MY SON — IN CONFIDENCE*

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IN CONFIDENCE

BY  
MILES MANDER

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To  
the legion of devoted fathers who,  
through doing the 'decent thing' in  
divorce or estrangement, are now  
anxious for their sons



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## *A Word Before You Start*

**M**y dear Theo,  
I want you to understand why I am writing you this book. To commence with, I have an almost aggressive pride in being your father. If I have done nothing else in this world, I feel I have, because of your existence, justified my own. You are at present so exactly what I wanted you to be, both in appearance, physique and character, that I am anxious to do everything in my power to preserve the mould as you grow to manhood. If, with your help, I succeed in doing this, I shall not only, selfishly, enhance the prestige of my paternity, but will, again selfishly, cause you to redeem my own erstwhile fatuities.

I shall not forget the day—you must have been about two—when you suddenly realized that both you and I were men. Since then we have been the greatest friends, and, whatever happens, that friendship must persist.

## *A WORD BEFORE YOU START*

To your mother you owe an incalculable debt. She has cherished you in infancy with that immeasurable tenderness that loving mothers have. Remember this when you grow up and are in a position to give her manly comfort and protection.

I have already been able to give you many hints which you appear to have assimilated, but there are a thousand other things that I shall have to tell you about life as you grow older. And because I feel that for one reason or another I may not be there when you most need me, I am writing you this book—writing it whilst I am still young enough to appreciate the viewpoint of a youngster. I do not necessarily expect you to adopt my advice, because I realize that by the time you are faced with a particular problem the years may have altered values. But the experience of your father should be of some help to you in coming to your own conclusions.

Finally, I am writing you because I feel that if all the little boys in the world had been drawn up in a row I should have chosen you for my son.

Good luck to you.

YOUR FATHER

# I

## *Your Birth and Antecedents*

**I**n the early summer of 1926, a few days before you were born, the workers of England, in obedience to the instructions of their Trade Union leaders, came out on general strike as a protest against the manner in which the Conservative Government was attempting to coerce the coal-miners. This was the first time that England had experienced an all-round cessation of work and it will probably be the last. Railways, buses, tubes and power stations were at a standstill, or rather would have been had not a million citizens, imbued with more patriotism than a knowledge of the issues at stake, banded themselves together into a corps of volunteers and, with exhortations from the Government, improvised a system of skeleton services for the benefit of an imperturbable public.

## *YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS*

During these happenings I was without money or work, and as, being in sympathy with the strikers, I was unwilling to join the volunteers, I borrowed a few pounds from a friend and persuaded your mother that it would be safer, from her point of view and yours, to leave London. This intention brought us one afternoon to Victoria Station in a horse-drawn coster's cart which we had stopped in the street. With the luggage on my back but with no destination in our minds, we boarded a train which puffed us amateurishly along the Kentish coast.

In a few hours we found ourselves at Broadstairs. As a little boy of ten I had been there at school, and still retained some pleasant memories. Your mother, now more than ever conscious of her pregnancy and therefore anxious for your welfare, acquiesced in my suggestion. We left the train. And it was at this precise juncture in English history, in these circumstances of national and domestic chaos, that you, my son, chose to make your appearance.

Let me tell you more about it. You were born on the 31st May 1926 at Cwmru, Ethel Road, Broadstairs. If the town had been Margate the phreician nature of your birthplace would have been complete. Cwmru was a three-roomed

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brick bungalow such as stands in Ethel Roads the world over. We took it because it was the cheapest we could find. Owing to a mistake made by the London doctor who had been attending your mother, you arrived a month earlier than we expected. The result was that very little preparation had been made for you.

I cannot now remember exactly how I felt about your coming. I don't think my paternal instinct had been greatly aroused until I first saw you as a living fact. Apart from that, there was the ever-present difficulty about money. For some years previously my living had been precarious and your mother had no means of her own, so the prospect of having to feed another mouth—a baby one at that—was not a little alarming.

However, to revert. On Saturday, May 29th, a very dear friend called Billy O'Bryen came to spend the week-end in our spare room. On the Sunday night your mother retired to have a bath, leaving us two talking in the sitting-room. Presently, during a lull in the conversation, Billy remarked that the house seemed very quiet. Without concern I got up and crossed to the bedroom, expecting to find your mother asleep. She was. I found her lying unconscious in the

## YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS

hot bath. Her mouth was actually under water and she was breathing through her nose. I revived her and put her to bed. Although she seemed none the worse for the happening, I've always wondered just how much your mother owes her life and you your existence in this world to Billy's premonition.

Next morning he and I left on the early train for London, he to go to his office, I to try and raise some more pennies. As luck would have it, the man I wished to see was away till Tuesday, so I was obliged to stay the night in town.

The fact that I had left your mother without money was not the result of forgetfulness. In fact I had no money. Neither would she have required any, as our credit with the tradespeople was good. Further, I had intended to return the same evening, and in any case Dora Edwardes, a girl friend of ours, was expected some time that day.

On the Tuesday evening, then, I arrived back without any apprehension or warning of what I was to find. In answer to my knocking, the door was opened by Dora. She looked tired and pale, but her eyes twinkled.

'Lionel,' she said calmly, 'you've got a son.'  
I have no clear recollection of what exactly

## YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS

happened then. I think I stood for a moment and stared at her incredulously. You see, darling, you had arrived a month before your time. It seemed so dreadfully sudden and unexpected.

Then I remember standing by the bed and looking down into the reddest, weeniest and ugliest of little faces struggling to hide itself in the folds of its mother's nightie.

For a period of seconds I stood silently watching. It seemed such an amazing thing that your mummy, whom I had left the day before as one individual, should have now become two. However, you both lay there blissfully indifferent to biological phenomena so elementary, and I was forced to accept the fact as my eyes beheld it.

Thinking back again to that first moment when I heard I had a son, I can now remember what I said. Almost automatically the words escaped me.

'Is he all right?' I queried.

'Quite,' said Dora reassuringly. But she had not gathered the true purport of my question. The fear in my mind had expressed itself conventionally. What I had meant was 'Has he five little fingers on each hand and five little toes on each foot, has he a roof to his mouth and does he squint?'



## *YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS*

You see, I'm going to admit to you now, that I don't think I should have loved you so much if you had been in any way deficient. Parents are funny like that. It is a mother's inclination to love her child in any circumstances, and the more so if he is demented or deformed. Not so the father. His love for his son is prompted more, I think, by pride. This again is manifest in converse form as the provoking factor in the attitude of a son towards his father. So you see I did not so much mind your ugly little face—all babies are ugly at birth—but the fact that you were whole and healthy meant everything to me.

Oh, but your voyage into the world was so clumsy! I must finish telling you.

It seems that Dora arrived at the bungalow at about eight o'clock at night. She had to knock several times on the door before it was answered. It was eventually opened by your mother who, deathly white and speechless, collapsed immediately in the hall. You can imagine Dora's surprise on picking her up to find that you were then actually half born. What would have happened if she had not arrived at that moment I do not know. But luck was on your side. Being a level-headed woman, she was not un-

## YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS

duly overawed by the discovery. In fact, she carried through the whole business herself, using a pair of sewing-scissors, and doing everything that was humanly possible to make you and your mother comfortable. Of course, by the time you were snugly installed in your cosmic surroundings the shops were all shut and it was impossible to buy any of the hundred and one little things that were necessary for your first few hours on earth; besides, Dora was short of money too, so that when I arrived the next evening a wooden drawer taken from a chest was still serving as your bassinet. To see you lying in it was comical and primitive, but on reflection I remembered another famous baby who had been born in a manger, so that you were, after all, following in a fine tradition.

There end the intimate details of your birth. I need only tell you that ten days later your mother accompanied me on a three-mile walk to Kingsgate Castle and back. She was, and is, a very healthy woman.

Now, perhaps I should tell you something of your antecedents. Of your mother's family I can speak but little, as I know but little. She is the second daughter of William George French,

## YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS

barrister, of Sydney, New South Wales. Your mother is the eldest child of his second marriage, his first wife, by whom he had a boy, William, and a girl, Alma, having died.

Your grandmother is a lovely woman of Irish parentage from whom your mother undoubtedly inherits her looks. (At any rate I have your word for this, and you have seen her and I have not. You told me the other day, 'You should see my granny, she's got most beautiful white hair—really! Not a grey hair in it.') She had three children, Kathleen (your mother), Cyril, and Dulcie. All the children were brought up in the Catholic faith, on which subject I shall touch later.

That your grandfather is in receipt of a substantial income from England, where he was born, is fairly certain, but who his father was I have not yet been able to confirm. Although I have never met him I have reason to believe he is a man of culture and refinement, for his children bear every sign of having had what is known as a gentle upbringing. They are individually artistic and possess but few characteristics of the traditional Australian.

About my own family I could, of course, tell you more, but as you will undoubtedly hear it all

## *YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS*

in due course I will confine myself to the barest details. My father was Samuel Theodore Mander, an excessively good man of puritanical yeoman stock. He was a member of a large and prolific family which is localized in the neighbourhood of Wolverhampton, where they manufacture varnish. That they have been doing this for 150 years only goes to prove that insanity and integrity are very closely allied. The only justification for an occupation so prosaic, and an existence so provincial, must be the accumulation of wealth. This being so, the Manders have nobly vindicated themselves. In addition, at the time of writing, they have produced one baronet, one Member of Parliament, High Sheriffs, Deputy Lieutenants and several of the lesser municipal dignitaries such as Mayors, Magistrates and Councillors. In fact, we are quite obviously worthy people.

My mother's name was Flora St. Clair, eldest daughter of Henry Nicholas Paint, Captain in the Canadian Navy and one-time Member of Parliament for Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where he settled after emigrating from Guernsey. He died at the age of ninety-something.

You will see, therefore, that unless your mother's father will substantiate certain

## *YOUR BIRTH AND ANTECEDENTS*

rumours, although you may look one, you are no aristocrat. Healthy, pioneering, middle-class British blood flows through your veins. For that you must be thankful.

## II

### *Your Mother and I*

I am so exceedingly anxious that I should not appear to sit in judgment on either your mother or myself, afraid lest I should prejudice you one way or the other, that I have been invoking my senses for an equitable pen.

Impartiality, however, is not the only problem I am facing. The fear that I may unwittingly group myself with those people who have seen fit, of recent years, to sell the private details of their lives and those of their friends to the Sunday papers, increases the delicacy of my task. The situation may be different but I am still conscious of its implications. Yet it is absolutely necessary as a premise to these talks with you, that you should appreciate as far as possible the relationship between us three. That I shall be fair and not offend, then, will be my earnest prayer.

For there is nothing more unjust and cruel than that children of estranged parents should

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be allowed to grow up with the impression that their stay-away father was a drunken ogre or their absent mother a heartless syren. Too often have I heard young people making this averment when there was probably no greater justification for it than the fact that two perfectly good people were either mentally or physically, or in some way qualitatively, unsuited for the difficult business of living together.

Such is the case with us. So you will know by the time you are old enough to read these pages, in fact I think you already realize, that your mother and I do not cohabit to the extent that conventionally married people should. We meet, we go out together, and I know that fundamentally we are immensely fond of each other. But the external influences that modern civilization brings to bear on men and women who have mated according to legal requirements are so complex, irritating, subversive, and difficult of understanding that it requires either a nature of supreme tolerance, a common feeling of supine indifference, or a perception of acute dumb-headedness before they can be withstood and viewed in their right perspective. Neither your mother nor I are blessed with these attributes. We find, therefore, that the

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mutual enjoyment of each other's company is limited.

In addition to the above objective reasons, there is the inevitable influence of spiritual change to be contended with. As we humans pass through life, our susceptibilities become subject to various phases which are largely psychological and are occasioned, I believe, by glandular permutation. They are, at any rate, beyond our control. During this process, very definite alterations take place. There is a change in our likes and dislikes, in our sensibilities, in our mentalities, and in our intellectual selves. The human make-up is thus intensely intricate; so that, when two people are thrown year after year into the closest contact, it is not surprising, bearing in mind this biological revolution of the individual, that they frequently fail in the adjustment of imperfect concords despite the fact that some of us are blessed with the quality of adaptability.

Your mother and I have known each other many years and have run the gauntlet of the vagaries above mentioned. We find, therefore, amongst other things that our tastes which we at one time shared, have since developed in divergent directions, so that to-day we have



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little in common except our love of you. It is not a question of apportioning blame. The case is perfectly simple: there is nothing peculiarly personal about it: it is the story of a million others—we possess conflicting dispositions.

But apart from these commonplace temperamental differences, the hiatus between us is effectually widened by certain people, for the most part women, who claim friendship with your mother and whose presence is familiar in cases of this sort. These 'friends', whose own lives are so chaotic and vapid that they must perforce endanger other people's, keep her liberally supplied with trifles of malicious gossip about me. What they tell her is of necessity third-hand prattle, and therefore, far removed from the truth, but in yielding to their natural inclination to wallow in the dung of scandal and vilification, they succeed, under a sham cloak of friendship, in hurting her very much indeed. She is a very sensitive woman and is easily distressed. In these circumstances the atmosphere of peace so essential to anyone engaged in imaginative work is lacking. I cannot, at my age, tolerate rows with impunity. Even mental antagonism makes a physical wreck of me—and of her.

## YOUR MOTHER AND I

And what of myself; what confessions must I make, for it is only fair to tell you that your mother thinks that I am largely responsible for our disunion. Whilst this is, of course, to be expected, I must nevertheless own up to my delinquencies. To begin with, whereas your mother is customary-minded, I am a bit of an iconoclast. Orthodoxy and Iconoclasm are poor bedfellows. I hate the former; it smacks too much of convention and hypocrisy. I dislike any restrictions beyond those of decency and kindliness.

For this reason I do not care for domesticity in its accepted sense. I am a bit of a tramp, and therefore I suppose, for a tidy-minded person, unsatisfactory to live with. In small matters like my personal comfort I am selfish; in big things, I believe, the reverse. I am not an egoist, but domesticity offends my ego. I give your mother her complete freedom because I trust her. I insist upon my own. The trouble is that she is one of those women who, reacting to a primitive instinct of domestic hegemony, does not desire her freedom. But it is as necessary to my particular nature and my work as the air is to the lungs. I cannot live in bondage to the hearth. I must adventure

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forward. During difficult times people have said to me, 'If only you could get a regular job in the City'. I can't imagine anything more dreadful than having a regular job anywhere—let alone in the City.

So you see, dear, I am a funny cuss. And yet I have often told your mother she might have done much worse. Being a teetotaller, I do not get drunk. I do not gamble or debauch. Neither do I beat your mother. Yes, she might have done much worse than me.

How complicated this colossal task of parenthood. When marriage goes awry the real sufferer is usually the child, but we are both determined that in our case this shall not be so. If our stupid differences were allowed to affect you, the situation would degenerate into a tragedy which to-day is all too common, a tragedy in which you would be the final victim. I give you my solemn promise this shall not occur.

Just now, wee chap, as my pen wavered with my thoughts, my eyes fell on the mantelpiece. I saw your cheeky face aged three, your roguish eyes and flapping ears. Next to you, in another photo-frame, stands your mother. Assessing things in retrospect may be a faulty process, but

## YOUR MOTHER AND I

if time must produce its mellowing effect I will not resist its influence. She is a very lovely woman and I have idolized her with all my heart. Those roguish eyes she gave to you, also your funny little nose and colouring. For nine months she bore you bravely and then made me your father. Therefore, before finishing this chapter, I want to make doubly certain I am not decrying her. If I tell you that for you, my darling, she has only the most beautiful of thoughts and wishes, you can be grateful to her. If I tell you too that of all the women I have ever met she is the most virtuous and loyal, it will be true and you can be surely proud of her: in fact, if she had not been a fine person I should not have felt justified in writing this chapter. But if, on the other hand, I have inadvertently betrayed a note of derogation in my allusions to her, it is because I am resentful of the fact that I am unable to be always with you: because, yielding to the demands of English gallantry and the brutality of our divorce laws, I must face the possibility that sometime in the unknown future I may be forced to jeopardize my right to pilot you on the road to manhood: because, in short, life is what it is. Understand?

### III

#### *On Schools and Things*

**B**efore going any further I must make something clear. Having just read through the foregoing chapters I feel my style of writing needs some explanation. It is in itself an anachronism. Although I am speaking to a child I am using grown-up words and phrases. The truth is that I am addressing in my thoughts a little boy aged seven. Thrills of paternity are going through me, as I write, to think that one day, perhaps ten years hence, he will be able to read this book and will thus be in direct contact with my innermost reflections. The alternative to this form would be for me to write in baby language which would, of course, not only be impossible but also stupid. I prefer, then, to amble on spontaneously, jotting down what comes into my head. By that method I shall be

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sincere, which will excuse a multitude of literary sins. I have not yet, in any case, decided as to whether I shall submit this little volume for publication. Time enough for that when it is finished.

And now about your schooling. On this subject my experience is rather extensive. I was at two Preparatory Schools, two Public Schools and almost two Universities. At the age of nine my father sent me to Sunningdale, a rather famous school of which Mr. Crabtree is now headmaster. You may remember that for the months of August and September last year, 1933, we took the Master's house during the summer holidays, while the boys were away. You may remember the grounds of twenty acres which Mr. Crabtree very kindly placed at our disposal—the cricket ground, the tennis courts, the fives courts and the swimming-pool. It was and is a good school, but, standing as it does in the midst of pine woods, I don't think, as a boy, it suited me too well. At any rate I was only there a year, for when Mr. Girdlestone, the then headmaster, died, my father took me away and sent me to St. Peter's Court, Broadstairs. This is another famous school, not only because the King's younger sons were there, but because

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the joint headmasters, Mr. Richardson and Mr. Ridgeway, made it so.

After two and a half years by the sea I went to a very famous Public School whose name I need not mention. I will tell you in a few moments why I did not stay the course there. Sufficient for the moment that I was not happy, so at the age of fifteen I was transferred to Loretto School in Scotland. Three years on the Firth of Forth transformed me from a puny boy into a strong and manly youth.

Cambridge came next. I went up for my 'Little-go' and failed in mathematics, the subject in which you are showing such promise, inherited no doubt from your maternal grandfather. By that time I had lost both my father and my mother and was being sponsored by my elder brother, your Uncle Geoffrey. He was just off to Montreal to marry a Canadian girl and asked me if I would care to go to McGill University instead of Cambridge. I jumped at the chance and, shortly after, sailed with him for Canada. If I had studied at McGill, indeed if I had worked at any of my schools, I should have been a much more learned person than I am today. Instead, I was recalcitrant and lazy. I regret it very much.

## ON SCHOOLS AND THINGS

I am telling you all this because I want you to appreciate that I should know something about the routine system of education for the sons of English gentlemen; that when I say I am going to send you here or there my decision will be the outcome of very careful thought and practical experience. I am going to have the greatest fun and, I hope, pride in watching you develop into manhood.

\* Education and character development go hand in hand. If we invoke the law of cause and effect we must admit that heredity and example are the compelling motives in character formation, and inasmuch as education is in the vanguard of culture it must act as a lubricating medium during that process.

Owing to lack of parental guidance and a weakness for the vapidities of life, I did not 'find' myself till I was twenty-eight or thirty. When I think of the discredit of those squandered years I am appalled. True, I have acquired a vast store of worldly knowledge, but I am, for instance, so badly read that I am sorely handicapped in the vocation which I love best—the job of writing. This must not happen to you, my son. Life is so dreadfully short one cannot afford to play havoc with the first half



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of it. And so I'm going to tell you of the plans I have made for your impressionable years.

For the last three terms you have been going to North Foreland Court, Broadstairs. This is a school for little boys and girls between the ages of six and twelve. You were only a day boy, being taken there and brought back home by your nanny. You were happy and were getting on well with the three 'R's'—reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. The headmistress, Miss Emptage, had a big admiration and affection for you. Although she said you were mischievous she thought you were a happy, truthful, manly little chap, sensitive and independent. I agree. I don't mind about the mischief. Your last report was quite excellent. It may interest you in after life to see it, so I have set it out opposite.

A moment ago I rang up your mother to ask her for the copy of the report. She wasn't in, but, instead, you came to the 'phone. What a lovely English voice you have. No Oxford accent about you, just pure musical English. I hope it doesn't alter as you grow up, and that when your voice breaks you will speak our language with that international tone which is accentless.

## ON SCHOOLS AND THINGS

### NORTH FORELAND COURT BROADSTAIRS

*Report for Term ending April 3rd 1933.*

*Name. Theodore Mander. Age  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years.*

*Form IV. Number in Form, 7.*

*Final Position in Form, 4.*

*Average Age, 6 yrs. 10 months.*

<i>Scripture</i>	Excellent.
<i>Arithmetic</i>	Good.
<i>History</i>	Very good.
<i>Geography</i>	Very good.
<i>Dictation</i>	Good when he tries hard.
<i>Reading</i>	Very fair.
<i>Writing</i>	Needs great care.
<i>Recitation</i>	Good.
<i>Drawing</i>	Very fair.
<i>Handwork</i>	Good.
<i>Drilling</i>	Very good.
<i>Singing</i>	Not much singing voice yet.
<i>Games</i>	Very good.
<i>Conduct</i>	Good. Theo is very intelligent and has worked well.

You told me on the 'phone you had an idea  
it might be me, that's why you answered. You

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asked me what I was doing and I said I was writing a book for you. At this you were most interested and asked me what the story was about; you said you'd tell me what to call it. Alas, my child, what is it all about? Life, I suppose, and the living of it, that you shall see the beauty in it. But how could I explain that to you today? Instead, I told you I was writing to you about the things I wanted you to do in life so that you could make a success of it. You seemed to understand that but you didn't offer to name it for me. What you did was to ask me when I was going to take you out again. I shall tomorrow, Sunday, if your Ma will let you come.

Now, this is going miles away from schools and things, so I must revert. You've left North Foreland Court because you're going to Australia for six months with your mother. I was loath to let you go. We had an awful battle about it and I could have stopped you going by legal process if I had liked. But I think she's rather lonely at the moment and I can't help feeling sorry for her. I feel also that until you are nine or ten and at a boarding-school you are closer to her than to me. That is as it should be; I don't complain. Therefore, although I

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hate the idea of not seeing you for six months, of your missing school for all that time and of your going through the Tropics at the height of the monsoon, I have given way. She is not demonstrative in things like that, but I think your mother appreciates my action.

Well, when you come back I am sending you to a day school in London, probably Wagners in Queen's Gate. For two or three years you will be going to day schools like this. Things being as they are with your parents I don't suppose you will stay at any one school all that time. It depends where you are living—town or country. Until you go to a proper Preparatory School and become a boarder, a change of schools will not matter very much.

When you are ten, however, I am sending you abroad. You will have a year of school in France and a year of school in Germany. I feel it is most important that you should obtain an elementary knowledge of foreign languages before you go to your Public School. Further, I don't want you to be insular, and by being sent abroad at an early age you will, by coming into contact with foreign peoples and their customs and manners, obtain a broader aspect of life which will be invaluable to you later on.

## ON SCHOOLS AND THINGS

I was very lucky in this respect myself. My people provided me with French and German governesses when I was a tot. When I was eleven, my mother, who was a chronic invalid, went to live in Switzerland. Nearly every holiday I went out to be with her; so that by the time I was thirteen I spoke three languages fairly fluently. I cannot tell you how useful this has been to me in later life. In your case you will have the advantage of me, in that you will actually live on the Continent in intimate association with the natives for at least two years. Then, when you are twelve or thirteen you will come back home and go to a Public School to remind you that, after all, you are an Englishman, and to assimilate all those mental niceties that make the English gentleman the criterion of behaviour the world over.

I have already told you that I, myself, was sent to a certain famous school. It is an institution which, today as always, basks in a fine tradition. But you will probably find as you go through life that tradition can camouflage a volume of iniquity. Such was the condition of this school thirty years ago: a veritable cesspool of iniquity.

I am not averse to bullying in moderation; it

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is good for healthy boys and teaches them the rudiments of defence and attack as well as discipline. It inculcates the instinct of self-preservation and makes for manliness. The danger, of course, lies in the fact that there are no rules for bullies, no prescribed limits. Boys of ignoble breeding and sadistic tendencies who are to be found in every school, may drift into excesses. Torture by burning, drunkenness, rape and bestiality were common practices in my school house thirty years ago. There is no necessity to go into the details which in any case are quite unspeakable. They are still vivid in my memory and are likely to remain so until the end. I was not myself subjected to the most brutal forms of bullying. Being rather a nice-looking little boy I was spared that. But there were two boys in my dormitory, one the son of a Devonshire clergyman and the other the only Jew in our house, who were forced to submit to the foulest degradation.

I well remember my mother, who was then a widow, saying goodbye to me before I went off for my first term there. There were big tears in her eyes as she held me to her for a moment and said, 'I don't know, dear, if I'm doing the right thing in sending you there. I

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don't know at all.' I am sure she did not quite know why she was worried; I didn't. Perhaps she had a presentiment of what I was to experience. Poor woman; she must have felt so lonely and helpless without a husband to advise her.

Then, when I was fifteen, she took me away. A few months later she was dead. I owe it to her and somehow to Providence that when I left I was still uncontaminated, unharmed in any vital sense.

In addition to the moral aspect I did not progress at work. During the whole time I was there I did not earn promotion from the form in which I was originally placed. This was largely due to laziness; also to misery. Whatever happens, Theo, I want you to be happy at school. You have the advantage of me in that so far you like school. I hated it.

Until my mother sent me to Loretto near Edinburgh. This school was as unlike the former as the sun differs from a Limehouse mist. There was literally no immorality or 'smut', as school-boys call it. The whole system on which the school is run prohibits it. The boys are infused with such an enthusiasm for games and fresh air in their spare time that they have no occasion to think of things like that; and when they

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go to bed at night they fall into a healthy sleep. They are not dressed up in stiff collars and Eton suits, but wear flannel shirts open at the neck, and shorts. Every boy has his bicycle and is encouraged to use it to go birds'-nesting in the summer when not playing cricket, or catapulting in the winter when not playing football. Incidentally, Fettes and Loretto, the Eton and Harrow of Scotland, share the honour alternately of possessing the finest school 'Rugger' team in the Kingdom. This is due in no small way to the fact that boys are not allowed to eat sweets or sit in 'grub' shops, filling their tummies with ice-creams and other unhealthy muck as at most Public Schools in England. They are therefore always fit and in good training.

Authority at the school is largely vested in the senior boys with the Headmaster acting as an appeal tribunal. The system is scrupulously fair in practice and a boy rarely, if ever, appeals to a master. In any event the masters are encouraged to be human beings and are therefore regarded by the boys as friends, and not ogres. Owing to a 'dicky' heart I was not allowed to play 'footer' one winter. Instead, they gave me permission to shoot, so I brought back a 12-bore and two duck-guns to the school.



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From what I can see of the young men who are coming into the world from the big English Public Schools today, they would appear to be sadly lacking in those qualities which have hitherto been known as manly. The same cannot be said of Loretto, whose motto is 'Spartam nactus es hanc exorna'—'You have become a Spartan, live up to it.' No lisping cissies there, but fine upstanding British boys with healthy minds and healthy bodies. That's why, at your birth, my son, I put you down for Loretto. You'll love it.

Now, before I leave this chapter I must give you some advice and warning about school life, and in particular, Public School life. When you first go to Loretto you will be amongst the youngest there. You must remember, then, that there is such a thing as seniority and the elder boys do not like kids who try and throw their weight about. You will grow up all in good time, and if you behave yourself will eventually be placed in a position of authority by the Headmaster. Time enough then to assert yourself. Do not get impatient with the years. You may find they drag like anything when you are at school. This will be balanced by the fact that when you are my age they will seem to

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fly. It is true that while I was at school I cannot say I even liked it, but the moment I had left for good I realized how happy I had been and longed to be back there again. Therefore do not waste your time. Whether you are doing bookwork or playing games I should advise you to do your damndest. You will find it boring and monotonous at times, but don't shirk it as I did. It is difficult sometimes to be interested in Latin or Greek, but when you feel like slacking say to yourself, 'I'm going to beat Father, I'm going to make him proud of me.' It won't be very difficult.

*Talking of Latin and Greek reminds me that* I'm giving you a classical education because, having had one myself, I have found it of the greatest help. It depends of course on the career you adopt and I shall have more to say on this point in a subsequent chapter, but I feel that you will thank me afterwards.

Another matter. A few months ago I told you that if, when you go to school, you are molested by bullies, you are to clench your little fist and hit as hard as you are able. This advice applies more particularly to Public Schools. You may not have much occasion to do this at Loretto, but if provoked do not hesitate, how-

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ever small you be. Bullies are nearly always cowards, but however big they are hit them straight in the face with no half-measure. This done, you will obtain lasting peace in addition to the respect of the whole school. If you allow them to get away with it, however, you will be continually tormented. To the remainder of the school be kind. You are a friendly and companionable little chap at present, so I should think you will be popular with the other boys.

Cribbing. There is always a certain amount of this in every school. It is prompted by laziness. If a boy slacks at 'prep' he is tempted to crib the answers. I don't suppose this will happen in your case as you are very quick and intelligent at present and the occasion should not arise. In any case, I shouldn't do it if I were you. It's not straight, is it?

Loyalty. This is a most important thing to observe—at school as in later life. Whatever happens you must never sneak. It's a dirty, underhand thing to do. Even if you are going to be licked for something another boy has done, if he is sufficiently cowardly not to own up, don't tell on him. Take his licking for him and then settle with him afterwards in the 'gym'

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or in some other spot where you will not be caught.

Talking of licking, this is the only form of punishment you will get at Loretto. Whereas at my former school they used to give a boy thousands of Latin lines to copy out as a 'pun', thus keeping him indoors poring over a desk, at Loretto you are told to bend over then and there and are given your corporal punishment on the back or bottom, whichever you select. In two minutes you are in the open air again kicking a football. And it's all done with the very best feeling; no sulking or resentment. The cane is far more efficacious and practical than the birch. Who should know better than I who once, *ætat.* 13, received the distinction of being sent up to the Headmaster for a birching. In the presence of a man who held a guardian office of antiquity, I was given six strokes on the 'bare'. Lying rigid on my face across two forms the twigs flicked out bits of flesh and made my backside and private parts bleed profusely. A nasty mess—before breakfast too! But it didn't hurt as much as the cane with which I got plenty of well-deserved lickings at Loretto.

As yet I have only had to strike you once—

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you must have been two and a half years old. You were directly disobedient and I made you hold out your tiny hand while I smacked it hard with mine. I shall never forget the look of utter incredulity you gave me when you looked up into my face for quite ten seconds before your own became contorted with tearfulness. Although you are sometimes far from a saint, particularly when alone with your mother, I have never had occasion to smack you since.

Finally, on the question of cleanliness and personal habits. There is an old and hackneyed saying amongst mothers and grandmothers that 'boys will be boys'. It obviously has no literal meaning. There are good boys and bad boys; clean boys and dirty boys; boys with clean minds and boys with dirty minds. But the reason some boys are dirty in their habits is largely one of laziness. There must be no 'boys will be boys' excuse for you. There is another saying that cleanliness is next to godliness, and a very good saying too. Don't forget then to wash every part of your body both frequently and conscientiously. Do not hurry with the washing of your teeth night and morning or you will regret it terribly when you grow up. You will

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be forced to have your morning bath like all the other boys, but don't forget to soap your crutch, your armpits and your ears and neck at least every morning and after football, or you will smell unpleasantly when you're a man.

These points are, of course, all part of a boy's school training. But there is something else—a more intimate subject which only I can really talk to you about. Masters are usually afraid of it and in any case they lack the necessary paternal relationship. I refer to the fact that while at your Public School you will first be worried and intrigued by the mystery of sex. Let me be frank and therefore quite clear about this. In the normal boy there are generally three phases of sexual awakening. They depend greatly on his state of physical development. The first is the auto-sexual stage which may commence at any time after his ninth year. It is during this period that he first becomes interested in those private parts of his body which are going to be so important to him when he is a man. Boys of weak character who have not been warned by their parents, being ignorant of the real use of these vital organs, will start abusing them. They only know that there is some mystery about them: some indefinable pleasure to be

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obtained. They do not know that if they continue in these practices they will become a habit, an addiction as difficult to forgo as drink or dope; that they are on the highroad to the madhouse, sapping their vitality, stunting their mental development and warping their moral resistance. At fourteen or fifteen they will discover that other boys, equally ignorant, are doing the same thing. Losing their natural modesty they will find an added thrill in the mutual investigation of the mystery. This second phase is a homo-sexual one. It has but little to do with the homo-sexual perverts one meets in after life and of whom I will speak later. It is merely a state in which the sexual inclinations of these boys have not yet found their natural outlet in woman. It does, however, happen that boys with degenerate tendencies, whose sexual development is not markedly normal, passing through this stage, become irretrievably submerged in perversion. I have seen so much damage done by schoolboy immorality that I am fearful for you, my son. Therefore, providing your development is normal, I am not only going to explain the danger to you frankly but am also going to try and arrange that you have carnal knowledge of a woman when you

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are fifteen. This seems to me more natural than segregating the sexes behind veils of cant, hypocrisy, and inhibitions. For when you have experienced this great fact of life self-abuse will seem a mean and petty thing. If a boy feels the need of sexual realization, surely it is better, no matter what his age, that he should find it in the natural receptacle of woman rather than that he should abuse those organs which God gave him with divine intention. I am, at any rate, of that opinion.

The third phase that I refer to above is the final one. When a youth is eighteen or nineteen he goes out into the world and contact with a woman is no longer considered quite so heinous an offence. If the boy is healthy and has survived his segregation, he will be drawn normally to her. I am dealing elsewhere with this aspect.

About a varsity career I will only say this—that it is not included in my plans for you. If one is to believe one's eyes and ears, Oxford and Cambridge are not today synonymous with that culture and healthy outlook for which they used to be justly famous.

So I will close this chapter. I expect you will hear most of it from me personally, perhaps,



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during the next few years, but having it in black and white you will be able to refer to it from time to time as you grow up and, doing so, will perhaps more readily understand my anxiety for you.

## IV

### *On Your King and Country*

**M**y beloved little man. Yesterday I said goodbye to you for seven months. You've gone to Australia with your mother. As a result there is a strange sort of silence about London. It's funny that the absence of such a little thing as you can make all that difference to a city like this with its millions of grown-up people, but it has. Although you live in Knightsbridge and I in Marylebone, I'm acutely conscious of the fact that my world has been altered. I feel like a shepherd without a flock.

I was at St. Pancras first and I ran up and down the train to find you and your mummy, but there was no sign of you. 'Ah,' I thought, 'they'll miss the train and the boat and won't be able to go after all.' And then, just as I was thinking that you couldn't make it anyhow, you

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and Mummy and Nanny came running through the ticket office, excited as anything. As a matter of fact the train was a few minutes late in leaving, so we got you bundled into the carriage and took a breather. Then the guard blew his whistle and you were terribly anxious lest Nanny and I should be taken to Tilbury with you.

Then you flung your little arms around my neck and kissed me. In all my life I have not thrilled to an embrace like that. I now know that the most perfect woman has nothing so spontaneous, sincere and innocent to offer. Nanny crying because she was leaving you and my own tears not so far away. Mummy holding proudly on to you. You are loved, my boy.

And now you've gone. Steaming down the Channel on a big Orient boat, heading for the farthest corners of our Empire in the farthest corner of the world. So, today, I feel that I'd like to talk to you about it and the King who rules over it all.

You will probably, like me, like every other English boy, grow up with the impression that England is the greatest nation on earth, that the British Empire is the greatest Empire the world has ever known, that the King of England is the greatest monarch in the world and that in no

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eventuality could we ever be conquered by a foreign foe. When examined in the cold light of grown-upness this may seem colossal conceit, supreme arrogance or anything you like. The fact remains, however, that it is true. If proof is needed, one has only to recall the past and present record of our achievements.

Take out a map of the world and have a look at it. You will notice that a quarter of the earth's surface is coloured pink: that is our Empire. Look at the population figures of the various countries and you will find that, of a total of 1,850,000,000 people, 450,000,000, about one-quarter, are British. It is nearly four times the size and contains nearly four times the number of people as the United States of America, the next in size amongst the ordered nations.

That King George V is the greatest king in all the world is obvious for one reason. He is the only king whose throne is as safe today as when he first ascended it. This is owing to the fact that his character and his conduct are above suspicion. The welfare of his people has always been his first consideration. He is loved by them and in addition he commands respect throughout the world.

Not a little of his success is due to his Consort,

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Queen Mary, whose sense of duty and judgement have been of paramount value during their reign. To be King of England is considered the highest office mankind can hold. The fact that it is hereditary gives it, in the minds of British people, somehow an air of sacrosanctity which no Presidency in the world can create.

The Prince of Wales, who may have succeeded to the throne by the time you are a man, has a deep sense of the responsibility of his inheritance. He is intensely human and inspires great affection not only amongst his own people but also amongst the people of other nations.

Lastly, among your boyhood impressions will be the conviction that we cannot as a nation ever be conquered. There is a basis for this belief. From the year dot we have been a nation of muddlers. We have muddled inefficiently, sometimes scandalously, through almost every crisis, whether it has been in battle, in diplomacy or in politics. But we have, somehow, in the end always come out on top. In 1745 we were defeated by the French at Fontenoy, and in 1776 the North American colonies won their freedom, having fought us seven years for it, but during the last hundred and fifty years I cannot

remember any occasion on which we have been defeated in battle.

The Great War which finished in 1918 is a good example. Blunder after blunder was made by our generals, hundreds of thousands of lives were lost as a result. The Mesopotamian campaign is one of the blackest pages in English history. It took our politicians two years or more to realize the nature of the struggle, then, having kept our men at the front for this length of time short of guns and ammunition, a merciful Providence threw up David Lloyd George in the guise of the country's saviour. We muddled through. The same thing may be said of the Crimean War and the Boer War, both characterized by the criminal incompetence and negligence of the military and political chiefs.

How, then, can we account for this invincibility, how account for that queer thing called greatness? Despite our traditional arrogance we are a quiet, tolerant people, even exasperatingly tolerant; so it may be that Mark Twain was right when he said, sarcastically or otherwise, that the English provided the best example of a biblical prophecy coming to pass: 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' On the other hand, it has been said that our success was due to our

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apparently slow wits, on the principle that the most successful crook is the man with a face like a mug. However this may be, we have been nothing like so unscrupulous in amassing our Empire as other nations have been in achieving things of less magnificence. There was a time when we were called 'perfidious Albion', but to-day, according to the noted German historian and biographer Emil Ludwig, our national honour stands, perhaps, higher than it has ever been. No, I don't think these are the answers.

There is another explanation and I think we will find it in the word 'character'. This is a strange, far-reaching quality which it is not easy to define. Walter Hines Page, American Ambassador to this country during the War, wrote a series of letters to friends in America which were published after his death. He paid many fine tributes to the British character, but I remember one that was particularly beautiful.

He was writing to President Wilson when he said:

'... Not a tear have I seen yet. They take the War and sacrifice as the price of greatness of Empire. You guess all their grief only by their reticence. They use as few words as possible and then courteously take themselves away. It isn't

an accident that these people own a fifth of the world. Utterly unwarlike, they outlast everybody else when war comes. You don't get a sense of fighting here, only of endurance and high resolve.'

You see, greatness comprises so many things. It includes bravery, of course, but many other countries have that. Rather does it mean cheerfulness in adversity, doggedness—bulldoggedness, holding on, tenacity of purpose, yes, and high resolve; it means fairness to the vanquished, an absence of spitefulness, quickness to forgive, sportsmanship, and above all it means that an Englishman's word is his bond. In Latin countries and particularly in Spanish-speaking countries you will find, even today, that 'on the word of an Englishman' signifies the height of moral commitment. I don't know at what period in history we acquired this reputation, but I imagine it to be a relic of the days of Queen Elizabeth when England was opposing Spain for the supremacy of the world. Or perhaps later, during the wars of the Spanish Succession when British troops under the great Duke of Marlborough established the military domination of England, then considered a heaven-sent glory, by driving the Spanish from the Netherlands and



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by defeating their enemies in a series of battles which included Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. Or, more likely still, during the Peninsular Wars of the Napoleonic era, when the English under the Duke of Wellington, allied with the Spanish and Portuguese, fought the French for six years, finally driving them out of Spain and gaining a decisive victory at Toulouse.

Although today we are not a military nation, we can, apparently, when put to the test, do seemingly impossible things. When those dear old gentlemen who sat in Whitehall regulating the affairs of the nation discovered in 1916 that we were really at war and gave the necessary alarm, it took us but a little over twelve months to place five million men under arms. These fellows were, for the most part, peaceful-minded civilians who left their jobs to fight for their country; nevertheless, we have it on the authority of our enemies that they were the most courageous, disciplined and fair-minded troops they had to face.

As a maritime nation we take a different place. Chiefly owing to the fact that we are an island people we have always been proficient sailors. But our prowess in this direction re-

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ceived a tremendous impetus by the defeat of the Spanish Armada during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. I expect and hope you will learn all about things like this at school. Suffice it to say that a Spanish fleet of 130 ships sallied forth for an attack on England. Our fleet met them in the Channel and blew them sky-high, only 53 vessels getting back to Spain. We lost one ship.

Then you will read about Admiral Lord Nelson, whose career of success and gallantry terminated at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, when he defeated the combined navies of France and Spain. He had already lost an eye and an arm in previous engagements and Trafalgar cost him his life. His words before the battle will ring for centuries in the ears of Englishmen. 'England expects that every man will do his duty.'

Before the Great War of 1914 England's naval policy was guided by what was known as the Two-Power Standard. This meant that owing to our enormous obligations to our overseas Empire we should maintain a navy twice the size of any other country's. The world changes with economic exigencies, and, although our commitments are now even larger than they were, other nations have considered it necessary

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to challenge our supremacy. The American and Japanese people have multiplied rapidly and have been building warships against each other. At the moment of writing we are not seriously menaced and for many reasons have not attempted to compete. Who knows what the future holds in store?

The mention of names like Marlborough and Nelson reminds me of others that will remain for ever on the scroll of valiant men who have loved England and died in her service. Of Sir Francis Drake, that great sailor and explorer, the first man to sail around the world, whose exploits against Philip II of Spain established the freedom of the seas and opened the far corners of the earth to British influence.

Of Sir Walter Raleigh, courtier, soldier, sailor, and man of letters, favourite of Queen Elizabeth, who seems to have been as successful on land as he was at sea, who founded the colony of Virginia and brought back the tobacco and potato plants to England. When James I ascended the throne this patriot was suspected of disloyalty and thrown into the Tower of London. Although he was released after twelve years he was never pardoned and finally lost his head. When he saw the executioner approach-

ing with the axe he remarked jocularly, 'A sharp medicine, but an infallible cure.'

Then there was Clive who, a century or more later, saved India for the Empire. Starting as a humble clerk, he rose to tremendous heights of generalship. As was so frequently the case in those days, he fell into disfavour on account of the wealth he had amassed, and it is believed that he committed suicide rather than face the opprobrium of his country. Opinions differ on this.

At about the same period James Wolfe was saving Canada for us by driving the French from the heights of Quebec. He was mortally wounded, but as he lay dying in the arms of his friends he heard someone shout, 'They run.'

'Who run?' he whispered.

'The French,' came the reply.

'Thank God,' he murmured; 'I die content.'

In the year 1728, a year after Wolfe was born, there came into the world, into the poor home of a farm labourer called Cook, a baby boy. He grew up to be a bright lad and, soon tiring of the fields, left his brothers and sisters and ran away to sea. Starting in the Merchant Service, he transferred to the Navy. In four years he was a master mariner.

Captain James Cook must have had the sea

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in his blood, because he is responsible for annexing more of our overseas Empire than any other person. He not only assisted General Wolfe to capture Canada from the French but he alone was responsible for planting the British flag in Australia, in New Zealand and in various smaller islands. It is a significant commentary on our capacity for muddling through that not until two generations after his murder by Hawaiian natives did anyone in England remember what this wonderful man had done. When Captain Phillip was sent eventually to take possession of Australia, he forestalled La Pérouse, the Frenchman, by a matter of only a few days. Thus was Australia nearly lost to us.

If I were to enumerate the legion of Britons who have set out from these shores armed with courage, patriotism and a high sense of duty to their country and whose names will stand for ever in England's book of heroes, I should not only exceed the purpose of this book but would be recapitulating what you will hear time and again as you grow up to manhood.

There are three names, however, that I cannot omit. First, Sir Ernest Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, because I consider him in many ways the finest Englishman I ever met and because,

also, he was a friend of mine and I can write from personal knowledge instead of historical record. This man after a training in the Merchant Service joined Captain Scott's first expedition to the Antarctic in 1901 as third officer. In 1907 he fitted out an expedition of his own, went South on the *Nimrod*, and with three other men got to within ninety-seven miles of the South Pole, which was, at that time, the farthest South penetrated by man. I met him and his comrades in New Zealand in 1909 on their way home and travelled back with them.

In 1914 he organized another expedition and was on the point of starting when war broke out. Nobody then thought it would be of long duration and Shackleton was told by the authorities to proceed. His ship the *Endurance*, provisioned for two years, reached the ice-pack of the Antarctic and was caught and crushed to pieces. They just had time to save the stores when she disappeared below the ice. Shackleton and his thirty-odd companions were stranded on this bleak continent of floating ice miles from any land. They built a camp with what they had saved from the ship and called it Camp Patience. For fifteen months they sat there at the mercy

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of the elements, and without a wireless transmitter, while their ice continent was disappearing bit by bit as the summer months approached. Until only a small triangular piece was left on which rested the encampment. Then Shackleton ordered his companions to man the three boats which they had saved before the *Endurance* foundered. They set out with as much as their frail craft would carry and eventually sighted Elephant Island, where they at last landed on terra firma. But what an island!—desolate and windswept.

It was now that the skipper called for volunteers. Every man was anxious to go, so he was forced to choose. One day he and three others said *au revoir* to their chums and faced the icy ocean. Eight hundred miles lay between them and South Georgia, the uninhabited whaling island in the South Atlantic.

In this open boat for sixteen days they rowed and rowed through the Antarctic waters. Until one day land was sighted. The seasonal whalers of South Georgia were packing to return to South America, but their encampment was on the other side of the island and a lofty mountain range divided them. His companions were exhausted after the exposure, so the skipper left

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them there to rest while he negotiated the mountains by himself. Then, sailing round the island, he picked them up in the whalers and landed them eventually in Buenos Aires.

There, and in Chile, Shackleton raised extra funds and equipped another ship for the rescue of his stranded comrades. Other men might have sent someone else in charge; not so this man. Landing again on the ice, he rescued his companions and returned them safely to the mainland.

But his task was not yet finished. It had been his intention to cross the whole Antarctic continent and to return via New Zealand. For this purpose he had arranged for a relief ship to meet his party on the other side of the world when he should have crossed the Pole. This ship had already left. Without a moment's hesitation Shackleton set out for New Zealand via North America and, obtaining the ready assistance of the local Government, embarked for the ice once more. He found the relief ship and brought it and its crew back to safety. If the Great War had not been raging and filling the columns of the daily papers, the feats of this middle-class Yorkshireman, with the broadest pair of shoulders I have ever seen and the twinkliest



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of eyes, would have resounded throughout the world.

After the War he again started for the South in the *Quest*. He caught a chill in Rio de Janeiro; it weakened him, and hardly had his little ship weighed anchor in the lonely harbour at South Georgia than the great heart of this Englishman ceased to beat. They left his body on the island near his beloved frozen wastes.

Captain 'Titus' Oates was a member of Captain Scott's 1910 expedition. Its goal was again the South Pole, which had not then been discovered. I knew Scott also and went to Southampton to see him and his party off.

In due time, after a terrible battle with the elements, they reached the Pole to find that Amundsen, the famous Norwegian explorer, had forestalled them by a few days. With hearts broken with disappointment they started on the return journey. Owing to the appalling weather they encountered their progress was slow. Their dogs died and their food ran short. For days they lay in their tiny tent while one of those terrific snow blizzards known only to Antarctic travellers penned the little party in. It was soon

obvious to all of them, lying there weak and ill nourished, that there was not enough food to take them all back to safety.

One day, as they lay huddled together in their sleeping-bags, 'Titus' Oates struggled to his feet and casually remarked, 'I'm going outside—I may be rather a long time.' Before the others realized it he had passed through the tent-flap into the blizzard and beyond.

He did not return.

Before Scott froze to death he recorded this and other things in his diary which was discovered by the rescue party that arrived too late. Let me give you two quotations from it. 'For my own sake' he wrote 'I do not regret this journey which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past.' And then this, 'Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman.' Speaking of Oates he concluded '... he was a very gallant gentleman'. He was. Nowadays that phrase is hackneyed, but I remember being very much impressed with it when Scott's diary was first published to the world. Con-

templated self-sacrifice such as this cannot be assessed in words.

I believe 2nd Lieutenant Victor Smith belonged to the Liverpool Regiment. He was by rights a civilian trying to be a soldier. I remember so well reading about him at the time. He was with his platoon in the trenches during the Great War. They were throwing hand-grenades across to the enemy's lines when one of his men let slip a bomb from his hand. It rolled back into the trench where his men were standing. Smith saw that the catch had been released and that the infernal thing would explode in a few seconds. Every man in that section was in danger. Without a moment's selfish thought he flung himself bodily on top of the bomb and waited. His men were unhurt but he was blown to pieces. His parents no doubt treasure his posthumous Victoria Cross as we English will treasure his memory.

And so I could go on interminably telling you of men like these: men who have thrown a halo of greatness and integrity across the British Empire. This same epitaph could be written on all their graves: lines made famous by some poet in the days when Greece was leading the world as we are today. They were written of Leonidas,

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King of Sparta, who died with his three hundred men defending the Pass of Thermopylæ against the Persian hosts. Ernest Raymond has applied them most beautifully to the English language. 'Tell England, ye who pass this monument, we died for her and here we rest content.'

Yes, written by some poet 500 years before Christ was born; and 2,400 years later, in 1914, a young English poet called Rupert Brooke wrote the following before going to Gallipoli never to return. 'If I should die, think only this of me, that there's some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England. . . .'

It must be a very lovely thing to be able to think of things like that. To do so one must, of course, feel like that. I don't mean the thrill of warfare—that is abominable. I mean the thrill of loving one's country the way these two men did. Brooke described it in a letter home when he said 'these people at the front, fighting for some idea called England, some faint shadowing of goodness and loveliness they have in their hearts to die for . . .'. I have seen that faint shadowing of goodness and loveliness myself. I don't want to die for it if I can help it. I want to live for it—for England; to do something for her people if it lies within my power.

## ON YOUR KING AND COUNTRY

It is some days since I started this chapter, as I can only write when I find the time. You will therefore by now be ploughing the seas of the Indian Ocean on your way to Colombo. You will have touched at Gibraltar, at Port Said and at Aden; curious, remote, sun-scorched spots, but all methodically and daringly acquired by previous generations of Englishmen with a view to creating a highway to the farthest corners of the Empire. I hope your mother will tell you all about them as you pass by and that you will, even at your age, obtain an impression of your birthright.

A few years ago, Alfred Noyes, the Irish man of letters, was on a lecture tour in the United States. He was due to speak, amongst other places, at a little town in the Middle West. The chairman of the meeting was the local mayor, a man of little culture but possessed of a power of sincere rhetoric. In introducing Mr. Noyes to the audience this is what he said of England:

‘ . . . that puissant and ancient nation that has learnt the secret of eternal youth; a nation that keeps fit, that plays the game, that stands by its friends, great or little, in their hour of need; that speaks its mind frankly and sometimes bluntly, that fights doggedly but when the fight

is over shakes hands . . . a nation that in climbing the hard path of duty somehow stumbles into the way of glory . . . an honourably prosaic nation, whose word is as good as its bond and who pays its debts for the unromantic reason that it contracted them.'

Theo, I am a Fabian and therefore internationally conscious, but, for the same reason that I love you more than any other little boy in the world, I love my country and its people before any others. I feel sometimes as though I'd like to lie prostrate on the ground and kiss the dampness of England's body that gave me birth. I feel the same desire to embrace her as I felt the other day when I took you in my arms to say goodbye. I cannot read words like the above without a lump coming to my throat. If that is patriotism, then I am not ashamed to be a patriot. If it is just silly emotionalism, then I will plead guilty to that. But words like these, spoken as they were by someone of a rival nation, do more to foster a kindly feeling between peoples than all the platitudes coming with doubtful sincerity from professional statesmen. They should have been published in every paper in the country.

I have not recounted the deeds of heroism

## ON TOUR KING AND COUNTRY

in this chapter for the purpose of applauding military or imperialistic prowess as such, because they have no place in my appreciative faculties. Rather have I meant to stress the stuff these men were made of—valour and endurance in face of hardship. For although it may be 'sweet and seemly to die for one's country', it is more useful to live for it. Know then, my boy, that a great responsibility rests on you youngsters. Muddle through, if you must, but in the process see to it that you go on 'stumbling into glory'.

# V

## *On Other Kings and Countries*

Now that we've had a talk about your own King and Country I want to speak to you of others.\*Let me say right away that because one is proud of the country that gave one birth that is no reason why one should belittle people of other nations, a fault which I'm afraid is all too common amongst Englishmen.

Although we are respected and feared as a nation we are not, generally speaking, popular as individuals abroad. This is occasioned I think by the fact that (a) we are inclined to be supercilious and overbearing in our relations with foreigners, (b) we provoke envy and jealousy on account of our tradition, (c) with it all we appear such fools.

These traits are apt to be objectionable to all except the effete and the snobs. In countries



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like Roumania, Greece, and Portugal, for instance, we are accepted as the exemplars of civilized conduct. No possible rivalry can exist between us, no cause for friction. This opinion also obtains largely in the U.S.A., but for another reason. They are the world's finest exponents of social and intellectual snobbery. In spite of their flag-wagging ballyhoo about themselves, the middle and upper-class American, if that distinction is possible, suffer from an acute inferiority complex which manifests itself in the way I have indicated, this kowtowing to the European and particularly the English people.

As I have America in my thoughts, let me tell you more about her. My remarks will seem ungenerous in view of the eloquent tributes paid to us by Americans, which I have quoted in the last chapter. But he would be a useless penman who allowed his opinion to be influenced by fulsomeness, even though it be sincere and flattering.

If you were to point out to an American that according to his country's films they are a vulgar people with rococo mentalities and without taste, breeding or manners, he would probably be annoyed, but he would also assure you that

their films were not representative of true national characteristics. He would say they mirrored the culture and mentality of the European Jews who controlled the Hollywood industry and that the good American disliked the average Hollywood product as much as we did. I don't know how many good Americans there are in America, but I do know that over fifty million Americans attend the cinemas every week and that the film industry of America is the fourth, if not the third largest industry in the United States.

Some say the American people are decadent. If so, they are the first people in history to become decadent before they have become civilized. They appear to have made sex their God and to have reduced both God and sex to the miasma of a pigsty. A people who are capable of dragging untried prisoners from their cells, especially when they are coloured, and hanging them on trees after putting a match to their petrol-soaked bodies, are quite unique. I know of no savages capable of such behaviour.

Speaking generally, and, of course, impersonally, nobody is incorruptible from the President, his Ministers and Judges, to the humblest policeman. The result is that crime flourishes

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uncontrolled, and murder, blackmail and other kindred offences, which in this country are rigidly suppressed by hanging and years of penal servitude, are there rampant and are accepted by most Americans as inevitable. In fact they are inevitable, and it is difficult to see how the Augean stable can ever be cleansed without the appearance of another Hercules to inundate the country.

This is a pretty awful picture I have drawn of the 120 million people whose President presumed to dictate to Europe at the end of the Great War. But there is another side to the picture and in order that you may know that I am not speaking with prejudice I will tell it you. To begin with, America, as I knew it before the War, was a very different place. They were a serious, hard-working people whose wish seemed to be to build up a progressive, clean-living community which would be an example to the Old World. Gangsters, for instance, in their present form, were unknown. It did not strike one that their moral delinquencies were any worse than ours. One is forced, therefore, to the common belief that their recent decline must be attributed to thirteen years of so-called Prohibition; unbridled rebellion against the

## ON OTHER KINGS AND COUNTRIES

attempted restriction of a people's just liberty. Also to Prosperity, fortuitous and ephemeral.

For they are, individually, a sensible, warm-hearted and generous people. Extremely hospitable, there is no trouble too great where a visitor's comfort and happiness are concerned. With all their faults they display a strain of idealism which is a strange concomitant for sordor and debasement. They are enormously energetic and leave us standing where enterprise is concerned. This is coupled with a fine individual determination to succeed, which characteristic is unfortunately too often synonymous with the determination to accumulate dollars.

Very sentimental these people, and, in a curious way, despite their much-vaunted smartness, a large proportion are even simple and childlike. One might say broadly that the country contains two types of people: those who are too simple to live and those who find it too simple to live on the others.

They have practically no indigenous art: plenty of good interpreters but few creators. But above all they have an enormous sense of humour and for that reason, in addition to a remarkable faculty for frank self-criticism, one

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can almost forgive them anything. Also, they are not hypocritical.

As I write, the nation is in a dreadful state of economic chaos and depression. Franklin Roosevelt, the President, is endeavouring with tremendous courage and honesty of purpose to pull his country out of the slough of despondency. We cannot yet tell what the result will be, but it may be that he is the desired Hercules. If so, he has a gigantic job ahead of him.

The rest of the world, including England, is also in the doldrums. But the Englishman is proverbially a grouser. He is habitually expecting the worst to happen. He is not avaricious by nature and never completely gobbles up the fruits of affluence even when they are hanging in his orchard. It follows, then, that the individual when called upon, subscribing these attributes to a mass psychology, assists his country to withstand adversity. The American people, on the other hand, polygenous, as yet unconsolidated, still a somewhat incoherent conglomeration of conflicting sensibilities, accustomed by their publicity and entertainment mongers to living at the height of their emotional capacity, are not so fortunately equipped and have descended to the nadir of defeatism.

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When one remembers the ripeness of gangsterdom and the cancer of graft on top of their economic troubles, it is obvious they will have to be a great people to pull through without a serious civil disturbance.

As I have told you, it is my present intention to send you to the Continent for two years between the ages of ten and twelve. I think it is absolutely essential that you should learn to speak at least French and German before you go to Loretto. I intend, therefore, that you shall get a good grounding in continental customs and atmosphere while you are still a boy. There is no greater prig than the insular Englishman, as I have already indicated. So let us look for a moment at France.

Here is a country that many people consider to be only half civilized. In certain respects there may be some truth in this contention, but it is certainly not true in the spheres of science, art and social amenities. There are few nations who have left so much to posterity in the way of literature, architecture and painting. You will find them a people of keen intelligence, bright, vivacious and impulsive by nature. In the large cities they are cultured and pleasure-loving, and in the country industrious and,

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above all, thrifty. They are an ostensibly patriotic people who will make any sacrifice for their country until that sacrifice affects their pockets.

The original occupants of France were of Celtic origin, but the country has been overrun from time to time by Romans, Teutons and Franks. Today, however, they are known as a Latin race and as such have little in common with us. When judging their actions, then, you must always make allowances for this. In the last hundred years or so the nation has been three times a Monarchy, three times an Empire and three times a Republic, these political changes following in the wake of the Great Revolution of 1789.

Those people who are inclined to disparage her civilization are probably influenced by the commercial and sexual immorality of her people, the apparently cunning and unstable nature of her diplomacy and politics, the treatment meted out to her civil and war prisoners and the unhygienic dirtiness of her middle and lower classes.

There is possibly something in all these points, but for my part I find their most unattractive traits lie, first, in the superficiality of their distinguished manners and, secondly, in their ap-

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palling avarice. For years they have been fleecing the foreign visitor to an outrageous extent, and now that people cannot afford to travel and spend in the old way they are experiencing the folly of their previous policy of extortion. They have repudiated their War Debt to America and have behaved in the same manner towards us who guaranteed their borrowings. To make matters worse, they have lent large sums of money to certain small countries of Europe in order to influence diplomacy in an endeavour to again encircle Germany with enemies. I must, however, admit that their manhood seems to be infinitely more virile now than before the War, and they are not cursed with a load of effeminate young perverts in the way they used to be and in the way that we are now.

The countryside itself is very lovely. The Mediterranean coast is the Mecca of that class of English and American person who thinks that the last word in smartness and gentility is to spend the day moving from one cocktail bar to another in a racing-car. An occasional dip in the sea between drinks justifies their bathing-attire.

Now a word or two about Italy, that country



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that has known, perhaps, more glory and more degradation than any other; a country whose people are responsible for the foundation of this worldly conduct we call civilization. All the way down the ages we find Rome one of the chief centres of interest in the world. Even now, after decades of disintegration, she is again in that group of Powers that count.

About 1860 Garibaldi unified the country with the fervid collaboration of Mazzini. After that, however, the country seemed to gravitate towards effeteness. They have an expression *dolce far niente*, meaning something like 'sweet doing nothing', and this slogan seemed to have imposed itself effectually on all classes of the community. In 1922, however, Benito Mussolini, a one-time Socialist, marched on Rome and, seizing a country rife with Communism, steered it drastically through the mire of corruption and defeatism until it emerged as we see it today—a land of order, culture and youthful ardour. There has been a *risorgimento*, a real rebirth, so that the traveller will meet a charming and enthusiastic people imbued with a new vision, a vision of life inspired by *Fascismo*, and a great tradition. For the reason that it is the centre of the Catholic world, if for no other,

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Italy will always be a country of significance as long as Christianity holds sway.

In the world of Art her achievements have been prodigious; the finest art collections in the world are her proud possessions. There are corners of Italy that, for beauty, are incomparable throughout the world, particularly in the north—the Lake District and down the Ligurian coast. The people of the north are also more friendly and charming than in the south.

Italian is a most attractive language, easy to learn imperfectly but difficult to speak well. I should like you to converse in it in addition to French and German.

One of the most delightful aspects of these people is their love of music. It is innate in them. I know of nothing more entrancing than to wander along the country lanes at dusk or by the side of a lake or the sea, and to hear the peasants and fishermen singing arias from Italian operetta. Their voices are naturally mellifluous, although untrained.

There is a long-standing friendship between the Italian and English people which is worth fostering. Once, when in Venice, I ran short of money. I asked the cashier at the hotel in which I was staying if he would cash me a

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cheque for £20 prior to my departure. 'Certainly, signor,' he said.

When I had pocketed the notes I asked him, 'Do you always cash cheques like this?'

He replied, 'For the English and Americans, yes.'

Then I said, 'Don't you often get let down?'

'No,' he answered, 'we have never had a bad cheque from an Englishman and only once from an American.' That was a proud moment.

Spain resembles Italy in many respects. She has a great artistic inheritance, for which, in the case of architecture at any rate, she is indebted chiefly to the Moors, who were driven back to Africa in the fifteenth century. (By this token, don't miss Granada, Seville, or Toledo.) Since the sixteenth century, however, she has been sinking gradually into an obscurity which obtained its original impetus from the series of defeats at our hands which I have already mentioned. Today we find her an anomaly; a somewhat lethargic country striving for self-expression, proud and self-contained.

The Spaniard does not worry much about the outer world. He cannot be bothered to learn other languages, so that if you cannot speak his you are at a disadvantage when

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travelling. He is reserved and difficult to understand, but once you have penetrated his apparent indifference he is warm-hearted, loyal and hospitable. France, being the only neighbour, is the hereditary enemy. There is a proverbial custom among the inhabitants to blame the French when the sun goes in. This is mildly indicative of the feeling between the two countries.

Recently they have ejected their King and have been trying to convert the people to Republicanism. We shall have to wait to see whether they are successful. They are backward and illiterate, and it will not be easy to turn a retrograde inclination into a progressive one.

And now we come to Germany. I suppose I shall be inviting a cascade of abuse from certain quarters when I voice my opinion that here is a fine people. It is difficult to discuss Germany without getting involved in political argument. The fact remains that, whether or not the Kaiser and his Ministers were responsible for the War, the German people in 1918 found themselves a defeated nation, with everything that they had been taught to believe in and look forward to submerged in blood and

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mud. They had been starved for four years and were very hungry. They had lost all their Colonies, twenty per cent of their territory, and on their Eastern frontier were marching with rampant Bolshevism. That puerile document, the Treaty of Versailles, had imposed on them conditions which were patently impossible for them to carry out. It cannot be very nice for a proud and virile people like the Germans to be in subjection to third-rate countries like Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Belgium. This was the case, however. If ever a country was ready for a revolution this sorely afflicted nation of sixty-three million people certainly was in 1918.

But what happened? Instead of losing their heads and running riot, as in the case of Russia, these orderly people set to work again. With the exception of ephemeral risings here and there, which were of no importance, the country, although despondent, has been entirely free from bloody revolution. There must be something great in a people who can withstand tribulation on a scale like this. However much one loathes war, one cannot help admiring an organization of human structure that succeeds, in withstanding the onslaught of the world for

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over four years and then survives with sufficient discipline to carry on.

Since the end of the War there have been 270,000 suicides in Germany due to poverty and despair. Of recent months, however, thanks to Hitler, the majority of the people are once more united in patriotic fervour. Although in many ways he has, by his obnoxious methods, outraged humanity, he has nevertheless given them a new faith, something to hope for—to live for. So that by the time I first send you to Germany you may find a happier country. You will at any rate find a hard-working, enterprising, methodical people only too glad to welcome you into their homes, and whatever they may lack in charm and refinement they make up for in a remarkable aptitude for scientific and artistic thought and appreciation. We English are much more closely allied to them than to the French, and it is a great pity geography took a hand in the Great War and ranged us against them.

Personally I like them. They are a worthwhile, deep-thinking people, and if they obtain a lengthy period of honourable peace they might well subscribe a dominating contribution to civilization.

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Before I close this chapter I want to talk to you about Scandinavia, because if I were not an Englishman I would sooner be a Swede. My reason for this is that I consider the Swedes the most civilized people on earth. Separated as they are from the rest of Europe by that broad expanse of water, the Baltic Sea, and with the isthmus of Denmark acting as a buffer State, they have assimilated everything of value from the world and have left the dross behind.

They are a fine-looking, robust people of Viking stock; industrious, hospitable, artistic and exceptionally honest. The country is mountainous, wooded and beautiful. There is no great poverty as we know it in England. A happy, logical community governed by a King and two Chambers.

And how democratic this monarchy! Traveling up from Berlin on one occasion, second-class, I got into conversation with a cultured man who was standing in the corridor, and who occupied the next compartment to my own. He gave the appearance of an English schoolmaster, although he spoke with a slight accent. We discussed many subjects before retiring, eventually, to our respective sleepers. On arrival at Trälleborg, the Swedish frontier

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town, the next morning, my acquaintance of the night before was met by several Swedish officials and treated with affectionate deference. On inquiry, I discovered this person was none other than the Crown Prince. This incident is typical of the Swedish Royal family, the head of which walks about the streets like any other citizen.

Talking of Swedish honesty, I must tell you a little story. A Swede once emigrated to the United States. He obtained a job as one of a gang demolishing some old Bank buildings in New York. During the excavations underground he came across a safe containing 25,000 dollars in notes and took his treasure immediately to the authorities. Next morning the New York papers published an account of the find with the heading 'Was he honest or just mad?' The points of view are interesting and are eloquent of the nations involved.

The Norwegians, Finns and Danes are only slightly less charming. I once spent a delightful but cold winter in Copenhagen. These people are very kind but, like the Scotch, rather dour.

A word about the Jews. You will meet them wherever you go in the cities of the world. You



## ON OTHER KINGS AND COUNTRIES

already know there is a universal prejudice against them, as you called me a Jew the other day when I refused to give you any more six-pences. This was very silly of you, because many Jews are kind and generous people. They are also, on the whole, a very cultured, moral and law-abiding people. That they have a capacity for making money is the envy of the other races, hence their unpopularity. In America they are partially ostracized and they have recently been hounded out of Germany. Only in England do they receive fair treatment. The result is that the English Jew, not being persecuted, is not quite so sharp-witted as his foreign compatriot. Galsworthy hit the nail on the head when he made one of his characters say, 'I don't like 'Ebrews. They work 'arder, they're more sober, they're honest, and they're everywhere. I've nothing against 'em, but the fact is—they get on so.'

Being clannish and not usually prepossessing in appearance adds to this tendency in others to cold-shoulder them. Also, whatever country they are settled in is always second in their estimation of things; they are first of all Jews. But there are good and bad in every race, and I have one or two very good and loyal Jewish friends.

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The low-bred Jew, however, is an abomination, a fact which is readily admitted by the better ones. He is decidedly worse than the low-bred Gentile. If you grow up, then, with the ineradicable dislike of the Jew which seems to possess some people I can only suggest that you endeavour not to show it to them. It is bad form and, although they are thick-skinned, hurtful, and I'm sure you don't want to be unkind.

How brief these chapters. How happy I would be if I had but time and space to write you of all the countries of the world as I know them. But that is not the purpose of this book, so I must pass on and leave a lot I'd like to say unsaid.

I will, however, give you a final word of warning. There is a common belief that the half-breed is a low type of person. Speaking from my own experience I have found this to be true. The Indian Eurasian and the half-caste Jew are perhaps the worst. Do not trust them, they are unreliable. The half-bred Chink, the Polynesian, the Creole and the Negro cross, on the other hand, do not display these characteristics to the same extent.

The full-blooded native is usually a good

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chap at heart. Endless damage has been done to him by contact with the white man, particularly with the religious missionary. To give you one example, the population of the Marquesas Islands in the South Pacific one hundred or more years ago was about 400,000. Today there are but 2,500 in all. They have been killed off by opium, syphilis, and tuberculosis, the products of white man's civilization. Instead of allowing him to go about naked or in a loin-cloth, the missionary has taught him to dress. His clothes get wet and, having no change of garment, he contracts pneumonia and either dies at once or develops consumption. It's a wicked business, particularly as the missionary sometimes has an interest in the local store where the clothes are bought.

In New Zealand, a very beautiful and well-governed country, the native Maori fares a little better. The ravages of European disease, after more than halving the population, have now been checked and the native population is again on the increase.

I am hoping very much you will somehow be able to wander round the world at an early age. There is nothing like it to broaden your outlook and thus make you a more useful member of

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the community. It is, of course, very nice to travel in first-class comfort, but you will be able to observe far more if you obtain a passage on a tramp steamer from Liverpool, Glasgow, Southampton, or London. You may have to work your way at certain points, but this will be all to the good. In these circumstances £100 should take you round the world.

When I told you at the beginning of this chapter that the insular Englishman was an insufferable prig, I was referring to the type of man who insists upon kicking up a row if he cannot get his bacon and eggs for breakfast when in Turkestan or Madagascar, and who will insist upon putting his feet up on the opposite seat in a railway carriage in a country like Italy where it is considered bad manners.

There is an old proverb, 'When in Rome do as the Romans do.' It is an excellent axiom, but it does not necessarily mean that you must eat only *spaghetti* and *gnocchi*. It means rather that you must preserve a gentlemanly bearing and be unostentatious in everything, in contrast to the average American who is loud in everything. If you remember this you will be a credit to your country.

## VI

### *On a Career*

Unlike most fathers, I am not going to formulate any definite plans for your career. To my mind there is only one thing worse than being forced to do a job that is uncongenial to you, and that is not doing a job at all. Every individual worthy of the name has a bent. It usually makes itself felt between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Being of a particularly roving turn of mind I did not discover mine till I was thirty. In the meantime I had sampled most things in life without the satisfaction of achieving anything beyond establishing the fact that, whatever happened, I must be independent. My father left me a legacy of some sixty thousand pounds and a partnership in the family business worth many thousands a year more. A clause in his will stipulated that I

should not have access to this capital until I had reached the age of twenty-eight. He did not, however, provide against the possibility of anticipating my reversion. The result was that, encouraged by self-styled friends, I was soon in the hands of moneylenders who, reaping a profitable harvest, finally left me penniless.

As to the partnership, that went the same way. After living a year in Wolverhampton I came to the conclusion that I would sooner take pot luck anywhere in the world than spend the rest of my life in such humdrum circumstances. I thereupon threw up a guaranteed affluence and came to London. I am not blaming my 'friends' or the Jews; only myself. I was the arch-apostle of folly. But in the same breath I must tell you that I have never regretted my decision to leave varnish-making and strike out on my own. In a life notable for its vicissitude I have encountered periods of happiness which are, I am sure, unknown to prosaic manufacturers.

As luck would have it, I reached the end of my tether just as the Great War started. The job of soldiering provided me with employment, albeit unremunerative, during the next four and a half years. It did something more: it brought me to my senses.

When I was demobilized in 1919 I had no money, but I was rich in experience and ambition. My good friend Philip Ernest Hill gave me a helping hand and launched me in the film business. Through this medium I got into touch with the artistic professions, and here I am. Some may think I am a successful man, but I am not yet satisfied myself. I do, at any rate, manage to make a comfortable living and I am, withal, happy in my independence.

With this experience of my own in mind I am anxious that you should choose your own career. On the other hand, as your father, I naturally have my preferences, and I intend to indicate in what direction they lie. Above all, I want you to do something constructive. For this reason I should not like you to be a book-maker, an actor or a snack-bar proprietor. Not that I have any particular prejudice against these people; on the contrary, some of my greatest friends are actors. But I do not think these occupations worthy of the personality and intellect which you seem destined to develop. The reason I became an actor was because I wished to enter the film business. Having no family, my only chance of getting into the more. and looking round was by becoming a

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crowd actor and starting at the bottom. The reason I am still an actor is because I now earn a comfortable living in that capacity, at least half my income being derived from that source. However, although I like certain aspects of it, I always have the feeling it is no job for a man. Actors and actresses are, on the whole, the most lovable and understanding people in the world: they are also gutless and sheeplike, occasioned, no doubt, by the fact that their living is of a hand-to-mouth nature and therefore, with few exceptions, they have no material background to rely upon. I am not offering this explanation as an excuse for spinelessness, only as a possible cause.

For, whatever a man's circumstances, he should not sacrifice his convictions, become a hypocrite, a 'yes' man, for the sake of material gain. Although they would not admit it or even realize it, nine out of ten men do it. Not for you, my boy; I think it's contemptible.

In this connexion I remember an incident that occurred to me a short time ago. An influential business magnate in the film industry asked me to direct a picture for his firm. Knowing that I should have to contend with the interference of mediocre brains and incompetent



executives, I thanked him politely enough, saying that I did not think we should see eye to eye.

He looked at me for a moment puzzled. 'Why,' he eventually replied, 'I will pay you well.' I shook my head.

'You don't understand,' I answered; 'if you give me a free hand with the job I will do it for nothing.' No, he did not understand me. Perhaps because he was self-made he thought money was everything. My professional reputation—in other words, my vanity—and my artistic conscience mean more to me than money.

While we are on this question of a career I should like to say a word more about money. As I hinted above, nine out of ten people believe that money is the most important thing in life. I am not going to say whether it is or whether it isn't. I suppose it is a matter of individual disposition. To the nine it is and to the one it isn't. I can only say that to me it isn't. Whether you will think it is commendable or just damned foolishness I don't know, but I have a reckless passion for truth, particularly in my work. Keen as I am on film-making, for the last three years I have steadfastly refused to direct pictures in which I have no faith. Feeling as I do within me a quite aggressive self-

confidence, I know that my attitude will pay me in the end; that some day some intelligent financier will say, 'This fellow seems to have a vast experience and an overbearing pride in his work; I think I'll back him.' It's damned hard to be patient in these circumstances, but I know it will pay me in the end.

I wonder if you will feel the same about money as I do. At the present time it seems to be significant to you. Whether that means anything at your age I don't know. Although you are always asking me if I will buy you this and that, how much I can afford to spend on certain things and how much everything costs, I don't know that your questions are inspired by avarice or selfishness.

For instance, the other day when you and I were lunching together at the Berkeley, the waiter asked you if you would like some more strawberries and cream. You declined somewhat ruefully. The waiter thereupon pressed you, and you, darling, said, 'No, thank you, it will cost Daddy too much.' This seems to indicate an appreciation of the value of money unusual at your age. Bless you, my child, for your kindly thought. I must tell you, in case you've forgotten, that the waiter, being a very human man

Now what is your own way to be? I don't suppose you will be able to decide this until you have seen a good deal of the world. For that reason I shall take you away from school when you are eighteen and give you rein. Rein to travel, to observe, perhaps to indulge your inclinations. Apart from the benefit I shall give you of a vast experience, I shall not attempt to restrict you. • Intelligent people do not need restraining because the essence of intelligence is a well-balanced mind. To attempt to circumscribe your legitimate activities would be to hinder your natural development. At the same time I hope, if I am available, that you will feel disposed to consult me in the way that one might consult one's best friend. My advice will always be considered and unbiased. As I have already indicated, I shall never try and force you to do anything you do not want to do. So that if, at the age of eighteen, nineteen or twenty, you tell me you would like to be a doctor or a lawyer or an engineer, I will do my best to see that you are put on the right track and get the necessary training.

Again, if, after trying one of the professions, you feel you have made a mistake in your choice and would like to try something else, I shall not

blame you. We cannot be expected at an early age to know our own minds. I wouldn't give a fig for a man who hadn't the pluck to change his mind. Everything in the world is subject to the influence of change, including one's ambition and convictions. It is only the professional politician who will not admit this. Hence the hypocrisy of his calling. Hence the condition of the world.

I am tempted to take this opportunity of going into the question of politics as a possible career, but, inasmuch as I am devoting a chapter to that subject in general, I think it would be better to discuss the matter then. A political career and political controversy are so inevitably involved that it is impossible to discuss them separately. Besides, a political career is not, or should not be, a money-making career, and that is what we are concerned with at the moment, isn't it?

Let us, then, briefly examine a few of the better-known possibilities. What of the medical profession? I mention this first because I am inclined to think it is the most important. To my mind the fact that a doctor spends his life succouring the afflicted, attempting to prolong life and tending the requirements of those

amongst us who need comforting, places him in a category by himself. My personal experience has convinced me that doctors are the most human people in the world. I have received more kindness from them than from any other type of person. I have found more honour amongst them. But to become a successful doctor requires a lengthy training and endless patience in addition to an ingratiating bedside manner (which you already have!). Until quite recently, however, the doctor's calling has not been considered in the front rank of the professions. To me this seems something of an outrage. It may be because the hospitals are not as a rule abounding in Old Etonians. Do not let this worry you.

Secondly, there is the Law. This also requires much study and patience. To be a successful lawyer one must also possess a gift, the gift of logical argument. Alternatively one must be able to argue pellucidly.

It is a great and honourable profession. A lawyer is not only engaged in pleading the cause of luckless miscreants, as in the case of defending counsel, but he is at all times defending the Constitution. British jurisdiction is the admiration of the world. Yours is the only

country in which the law cannot be tampered with. Justice is administered without prejudice or favour. For the foundations of British jurisprudence, however, we must thank the Romans.

Engineering. If you develop the mechanical bent which you are already displaying there is no reason why you should not become an engineer. It is quite a commendable occupation and in certain aspects remunerative. I should not, however, like you to be a motor engineer. I say this because as a young man you will no doubt succumb to the thrill of driving a fast car. But if you take my advice you will let this be the phase that it is and keep it within the limits of a hobby, albeit an expensive one. The motor business is full of crooks and nit-wits, young men with military moustaches and receding chins who have not a constructive idea in their heads. On the other hand, civil engineering, locomotive engineering, nautical, radio, aero and electrical engineering are excellent occupations if you are inclined that way.

Journalism is another possibility. The job of a reporter can be full of interest. He is continually on the move, albeit prying into other people's business. His life is a sequence of dramatic interludes. If he has a quick application

and a facile pen he will be an editor in no time. Promotion does not go by order of seniority, but by ability and talent. One of my best friends is the editor of a big Sunday paper. He is thirty years of age and is earning five thousand a year. Think seriously of this. Newspaper men are nice fellows.

The Services. I will not waste time discussing the military variety. With the Victorian era in the background and disarmament conferences in the foreground, no man in his right senses would think of adopting a military career. At the best of times it was patronized by people of uninspired intelligence or by young men whose fathers were prompted by that obsolete tradition which decrees that a boy should follow in his father's footsteps. One has only to read the history of the Great War to appreciate how contemptibly the senior officers failed when put to the test.

Of the other Services the Diplomatic is probably the most attractive. It is a fine thing to represent one's country in foreign parts, particularly when it is a country like England. However, it is an expensive vocation and I don't suppose you will be able to afford it. Then there is the Civil Service with its differ-

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ent branches, most of which entail sitting for years in an office in Whitehall, or, in the case of the Indian Civil, spending most of your life in India with the eventual possibility of becoming a magistrate or the Governor of a province. Rather like drudgery this, but it is entirely a matter of temperament.

The Colonial Office presents a similar prospect except that you do move about the Empire. If it is your ambition to spend your life in the service of your country and you are fond of a free-and-easy existence with a measure of responsibility, then you might think seriously about it. You might find yourself in Mauritius, North Borneo or the Leeward Islands. Life is made easy for you and, if you like the sun, very pleasant.

What about the life of an explorer; would that appeal to you? There is not a fortune in it; in fact real travellers do not look at the financial aspect; they just travel because they've got to. Read about St. John Philby and T. E. Lawrence, about Shackleton and Scott whom I have mentioned in another chapter. If their exploits do not thrill you, you are not the boy I thought you were. Not much money in it, true, but instead a sensation of accomplishment



which cannot be surpassed in any other walk of life. Besides, if you are nimble with your pen and are proficient as a lecturer you can sometimes turn your travels into gold. What do you say?

But after all is said and done it comes to this—that almost any legitimate occupation is commendable provided it is tackled wholeheartedly. I said before, however, that I should prefer you to adopt a constructive career. Perhaps I should rather have said creative, because I was thinking of the artistic professions such as writing, painting, music, play and film producing, &c., as opposed to the interpretative arts such as dancing and acting. Being thus occupied myself no doubt makes me biased in their favour. I, personally, like the life because it gives me a measure of freedom unobtainable in any other sphere. I am my own master. A writer does not have to get up or go to bed at any particular hour. Armed with his writing-pad and pencil he can bask in the Italian sun, explore the Atlas Mountains or squat in the Acropolis. He can eat curry in Kashmir or lotus in Tahiti. It is all copy-fodder for the mind. Then, tiring of the heavenly freedom, he can return to London, to New York or Holly-

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wood and study the result of his labours from the stalls of a darkened theatre or in the silence of a motion-picture studio. Would that I had not left it so late in life to cultivate my predilection. I cannot now catch up.

To my way of thinking the ideal existence is the one that Noel Coward has carved out for himself. Here is a man who bears every sign of being great. If proof were needed I would only quote the fact that since he has become rich and successful he is an infinitely nicer person than when he was unknown. That is a great achievement in itself.

In writing for the theatre, the novel-reading public or the Press, one is fairly free from interference, but in the film world it is different. In this year, 1934, the eternal conflict between the commercial and the creative mind is as rife as ever. The film financier will engage a producer to make a picture and will then proceed to show him how to make it. This procedure would be comic if it were not doubly tragic for those who take pride in their work. It is like the City director telling Mr. Royce how to design his car; it is like a business man commissioning Augustus John to paint a portrait and then instructing him how to do it. A craftsman

is either efficient with an efficiency that must embody a knowledge of commercial values, or else he is incompetent. In the former case he should be left alone to get on with his job, in the latter not employed at all.

For this reason, then, you might not be happy as a film producer. Only hack workers survive the ordeal. It may be that in ten or twelve years' time when you are preparing to make your decision things may have altered. I sincerely hope so, for the creative side of the show business is absorbingly interesting.

In such a small space as this chapter it is impossible to do justice to my subject, but I hope I have given you some indication of my views. Whatever you decide to do, do it with a zest. Develop your will power, your tenacity of purpose, your ambition and your industry. Do not be impatient to succeed or you will find yourself overrunning your capacity. On the other hand, keep the goal in sight. There is an excellent slogan, 'He can who thinks he can.' When downhearted say it over to yourself. Remember it is comparatively easy for a man with your mental and physical attributes to be Prime Minister when he is sixty. It is the man of character who gets there when he is thirty.

## VII

### *On Religion*

My father was an extremely religious man. What is more, he practised what he preached. He did not conform to the Church of England, being Congregational by denomination. His children as a result were brought up in a strictly religious atmosphere. Every morning before breakfast all the indoor servants would troop into the morning-room where the members of the family were already gathered. Father would then read an extract from the Bible and this would be followed by prayers when everyone would kneel down. On Sundays, Father and Mother would drive into Wolverhampton in the morning, accompanied by us children. In those days there were no motor-cars, so the drive in the brougham took a long time. On arrival at the chapel we would sit

through a two-hour service, half of which consisted of the sermon. After lunch Father would take us in a Scripture lesson. After tea we would all forgather in the drawing-room and sing Moody and Sankey hymns with Mother at the piano. Father would then go out somewhere to do duty as a lay preacher. When he returned we would have supper and then, at ten o'clock, all the servants would line up in the drawing-room and we would go through the same prayerful procedure as on weekdays before breakfast. It is almost incredible, looking back now, to think what we children must have suffered. The household of a bishop could not have been more devout. And when one remembers that my father was at other times a fine shot, an enthusiastic fisherman and a keen rider to hounds, one is left groping in a forest of irreconcilability.

But that is not the end of it. At the age of five I was christened in the morning-room by Father's great friend, Dr. Robert Horton. I remember the blue vase which held the water and the sprinkling of my hair. What it all meant I had no idea. Neither do I know why, at the age of fifteen, I was confirmed by the Bishop of Edinburgh. It is true that Father was then dead,

but how Mother was persuaded to hand me over to the Church of England, I cannot imagine. In any case it meant nothing to me; how could it at that age?

You will see then, Theo, that I was soaked in religious teaching. With what result? As soon as I became a man and was able to think for myself I looked back with resentment at my pious upbringing and thenceforth renounced the Christian Church. I am in direct touch with God myself and I need no man-made medium for reaching him. I have a pair of knees and a brain capable of concentration, and I can go down and show him deference whenever I feel I want his help or forgiveness.

And so with you, my child. When you were born your mother wished to have you christened. This was natural, as she was brought up in a convent. To people of conventional belief baptism is symbolical of spiritual purification and constitutes initiation into the Christian community. For that reason I would not let them touch you. It seems to me so dreadfully unfair to take advantage of a baby in that respect; to lock him into a church from which there is no immediate escape, to chloroform his senses with a cloud of superstitious dogma and

to tantalize his boyhood with threats of eternal damnation. No, my boy, I will not have it.

Apart from that there is no harm in your studying the precepts of Christianity. Your teachers at school are already filling your little mind with the old old story. I cannot help that, nor do I wish to. Christ was a very good man, as Mahomet was ready to admit. But so were Mahomet and Moses and Confucius and Buddha and Zoroaster; so also Keshub Sen and Gandhi, although the centuries have not yet rendered them divine. This is not profanity but common sense. Wait, therefore, wait until you are old enough to judge, believing only in a divine creative power which some of us call God. A power that is so colossal that we must fear and love him too. Then, if you feel the need of some mundane exhibition of divinity other than the manifestations all around us—in the trees, the flowers, the rain, the sun, procreation and death—join the church that most appeals to you and let no one coerce you in your choice. Samuel Butler said, 'Is there any religion whose followers can be pointed to as distinctly more amiable and trustworthy than those of any other? If so, this should be enough. I find the nicest and best people usually profess no religion at all.'

For myself I find that a steadfast belief in the Almighty is sufficient. But what would the Christians have us believe? We are told in the Bible that 'In the beginning God made heaven and the earth, &c.'. Then, millions of years later (according to the scientists) he sends his son in the person of Jesus Christ to teach us how to behave. Well, with all due respect to the Christian churches, I am not convinced. My intelligence is offended. It tells me rather that the so-called Christian teachings are the embodiment of natural inclinations evolved through the ages by sensuous cognition in conjunction with the struggle for existence. Christ was a martyr in their cause; a willing martyr and therefore a fanatical one. And whereas the essence of all fanaticism is a sense of righteousness coupled with extreme sincerity, Christ's motives were obviously of the noblest. In addition to this he appeared at the psychological moment, when the tiny world lacked moral stamina, when the people, although capable of Christian tendencies, lacked faith. Christ gave them this. Taking the ten commandments of the other Jewish prophet as his basis, he elaborated and exploited them into what is today known as Christianity. In the meantime the supersti-



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tious scribes of that period credited him with all sorts of fantastic powers which have given credence to the assumption of divine origin.

All Scripture is a matter of conjecture. The early records have lost so much in translation—in subtlety, in meaning and in application to modern psychology—that they cannot be relied upon in the condition of present-day enlightenment.

I am quite aware that most Christians will denounce me for my heresy and that students of the Bible will annihilate my theories. But, for the reason I have already given, their proofs will be inconclusive. Further, I could cite the fact that what are known as Christian qualities form the foundation of every religion in the world, from Shintoism to Animism, religions that have had no contact whatever with Christianity. It is truly amazing to think that the happenings of two thousand years ago, now almost mythical in their antiquity, have not only never been seriously challenged, but today hold six hundred and eighty million people in spiritual bondage. To an onlooker like myself, with unfettered views, this constitutes a pretty commentary on human credulity and fear.

Yes, a steadfast belief in the Almighty and a  
beneficent attitude towards man, which is the

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principles should be in the forefront of your conduct in life. The fact that they are the chief tenets of every religion only proves that there is a common goodness in all of them. To take sides and join forces with any particular sect seems to me the best way to foment dissension and thus defeat the whole object of godly thought. One needs but a smattering of historical knowledge to realize that intolerance of the most despicable nature has been the outcome of antagonism thus created. The most heinous crimes have been perpetrated in the name of religion. Taking the crucifixion as a starting-point, the subsequent centuries are studded with pogroms, pornocracies and inquisitorial persecutions, the most recent manifestation being the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis in Germany. Before that we had the persecution of the Riffs in Morocco, of the Druses in Syria and of the Arabs in Transjordan and Lybia. The great Christian influence behind the League of Nations did nothing, neither did it attempt to. The International Red Cross were asked repeatedly to send medical comforts to the Riffs who were dying in the crudest agony at the hands of the Spanish and French, but they also did nothing.

Why—yes, why?

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I cannot help feeling that, if the Arabs and Riffs had been some low type of Levantine Christian instead of followers of Mahomet, every pulpit in the Christian world would have denounced the butchery for what it was. Yet not one clerical voice was raised in protest. So much for organized Christianity: so much for the Christian churches!

Therefore, I sincerely believe that denominational religion does more harm than good. In times of peace the sects unite irrespective of nationality in prosecuting their religious battles. In times of international war, when racial prejudices are inflamed, they denounce their co-religionists in the enemy countries and invoke God's aid in the business of their slaughter. Was ever anything more illogical, hypocritical and wicked? And yet they do it in the name of God. What blasphemy!

And so, Theo, I must leave you to your own conclusions, for, as I have already hinted, to dogmatize about the Infinite is obviously absurd. If I were you I would eschew the mundane prophets and find God rather in what he has created; the sun, the stars, the oceans and the earth; the flowers, the trees, the animals and, not the least, in yourself.

## VIII

### *On Sports and Pastimes*

There is a well-known saying amongst certain people that 'the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton'. What this actually means I have never been able to find out. At the best it is a vile piece of snobbery.

Knowing, as we do, that it is the rank and file who fight and win wars, one is entitled to wonder what they have to do with Eton? Otherwise it might imply (a) that the Duke of Wellington and his entire staff were there, which was probably not the case; (b) that the brand of gentlemen they make at Eton is a braver fighter than the product of the Council Schools, which is certainly not the case; (c) that it is on the playing-fields of Eton that one learns to play 'cricket', but no one ever played 'cricket' in wartime;

(d) that it is there that one learns how to take a licking, but we were not licked at Waterloo. What, then, can it mean? Frankly, I do not know, but for the sake of this chapter I can, with slight alterations, use the adage.

There is a quality, an attitude in the human animal known as 'sporting'. Although it is not the prerogative of the British people, we are the original coiners of the phrase and are very jealous of it.\* To accuse a man seriously of being 'not sporting' is almost as bad as to call him dishonest. Although this characteristic is born in us, it would not show itself unless it were cultivated and fostered during the period of growing up. It might be called up in us at any moment during the daily roundabout and for a multitude of reasons. But it is on the playing-fields of the world that it first finds its self-expression. At cricket, football, hockey, tennis, baseball—it matters not which game—this instinct is called upon to function.

In this respect, then, the playing-fields of Eton are important. In the same respect the playing-fields of all the Grammar Schools, the Polytechnics, the Working Men's Clubs and the Village Greens are equally important. For it is here that a man learns to play the game in a sport-

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ing fashion, an asset that is so very important in later life.

Because if by any chance this spirit is absent from a man's make-up he does not enjoy life very much. Cricket, racing, flying, cards, and the many other forms of recreation a man indulges in today all demand this quality. But assuming that we do cultivate the sporting spirit on the playing-fields of England, it does not explain its application to Waterloo. When one nation is fighting another for its existence there is no time or place for 'playing the game'. In any case it would not help in winning battles. To this extent, then, I am still mystified.

One of the things about you that pleases me most is your great keenness in all outdoor games. 'Daddy, d'you know what I want you to give me for my birthday?' is nearly always followed by a request for a cricket bat, a football or a pair of boxing-gloves. This shows a very healthy state of mind and it is one that I encourage. Whenever I take you into the Bath Club you always lead me down to the end of the 'Swim' which is reserved for the various physical exercises peculiar to a gymnasium. Then, before I can say 'Jack Robinson', you are either punching the punchball with your little fists, swinging

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Indian clubs, or climbing up rope ladders with the agility of a monkey. Nothing 'cissy' about you, my child. Splendid!

At present there is not much opportunity for you to indulge this propensity, as you are living in London; but when you go to your Boarding-School you ought to be a great asset to it. At most schools boys who are good at games are more popular than those who have it in them to win scholarships. This is as it should be, and I feel that for this reason, if for no other, you are going to enjoy your schooldays.

Cricket as a game never appealed to me. I am one of those people who find it slow to watch and tame to play. But as I am in a minority on this point I must be wrong. It is a very scientific game and has a hundred different aspects: this is probably the explanation of its popularity. Its hold on the British people is extraordinary when one remembers that it is not played seriously by any other nation. However, it looks as though you were going to like it. You can already hold a very straight bat, and what you lack in style you make up for in vigour.

Football was more to my liking.

In my opinion, Rugger is the finest of all

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school games. There is a considerable science about it and every muscle of the body is brought into play. Also, as a game to watch it cannot be beaten. At Loretto they play nothing but Rugger in the winter terms and you will have some fine matches with Fettes, Merchiston, Glcnalmond, Kelvinside, and other Scottish teams. You will also go to Edinburgh to see the great international matches, Scotland versus England, Wales, and Ireland.

I wonder if you will be able to shoot straight with a rifle. I took you to a side-show rifle range the other day, and although you didn't get a 'bull' you put them all on the target—three 'outers', an 'inner' and a 'magpie'—not bad for a kid of your age. My great friend David Anderson (killed in the War) and I inaugurated the shooting 'Eight' at Loretto. Your cousin Arthur (Sir Charles) Mander shot for Eton, Cambridge, and England, so you may have inherited a good eye.

Then there is tennis. In my day this game was not played at school, but nowadays I believe it is included in the games curriculum. Perhaps rather unfortunately, many young men of today have taken it up in preference to the sterner games, but it is first-class



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exercise and demands a quick eye and clean living.

Golf. The front gates of Loretto School open on to the Musselburgh Golf Links, so you will get plenty of opportunity to learn this. Although I started playing whilst there, I failed, as with every other game, to become really proficient at it. I should take it up seriously if I were you, if only for the fact that the whole world now plays it. It is a game that can be played the whole year round, and you will find it fine exercise during winter week-ends in after life when you are requiring some relaxation from your work.

I should also learn how to box. You will get a chance to do this during 'gym' hours. It may be very useful to you when you are a man. You never know what sort of tight corner you may find yourself in, and a man who is handy with his fists is usually the one who comes out on top in a scrap. For that reason I am already teaching you to keep a straight left. Professional boxing is best left alone. It is a crooked business. Six out of every ten fights are 'faked'; in other words, it is arranged beforehand who shall win. The general public do not appreciate this. As I have been a boxing promoter, albeit one of the 'simple' variety, I do.

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Now let us discuss some of the adult recreations, those that make demands on manhood such as motoring, flying, racing, hunting, yachting, card-playing, &c. As regards the first of these—motoring—this is now hardly a pastime, much less a sport. But I well remember the days at the beginning of the century when it really was a sport.

In 1902, whilst still a boy at school, I bought my first car. I say I bought it, but actually it was more a question of barter. I acquired it in exchange for a double-barrelled twelve-bore gun, a Columbia gramophone and a five-pound note. It was sent home to Wolverhampton to await my arrival for the holidays. The rest of that term was an agony of suspense for me, and when I eventually saw my motor-car I was thrilled to the core.

I remember it so well. It was a two-seater phaeton-bodied vehicle with tiller steering. On the tiller were the control levers—throttle, ignition and air, and a ratchet for a two-speed and reverse-gear change. If you happened to overshoot the top speed you went automatically into reverse. The engine—a  $2\frac{3}{4}$ -h.p. De Dion with a water-cooled head—was in front, and the crankshaft itself was part of the front axle. There was

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no differential. In order to start the motor one had to wrap a rope round a broad pulley which was fastened to the crankshaft and then tug for all one was worth. It frequently happened that the motor back-fired, dragging one's hand and arm (and body) into the engine. After a little we began to appreciate this easy starting device for what it was worth and were thereafter content to push the vehicle to the top of a hill and run it down again in gear. Yes, in those days motoring was a sport, but today the motor-car has become a necessity to almost everyone. It is just a means for getting about. Motor-racing is different, but as this necessitates a considerable expenditure it must be left either to millionaires or professionals.

The same remarks apply to flying, except that you may wish to take this up as a career. I should not care to think that you were going to be a professional aviator, but, as I have already told you, it is for you to decide.

In my younger days flying was the essence of sport if only for the fact that it was the riskiest of occupations.

In 1909, just after Blériot flew the Channel, I bought a monoplane—a cross-channel type Blériot. I learned to fly at Pau with Claude

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Graham-White. We had tremendous fun—some day I will tell you all about it in another book. At the beginning of 1910 I brought my machine back to England, took it first to Brooklands, then to Hendon, and made the first official flights at both places. (Incidentally, I should like you to treasure my silver cups; in a hundred years they may be worth something.) At that time A. V. Roe (now Sir A. V. Roe) was down at Brooklands trying to get off the ground with a quaint-looking triplane we used to call 'the meat safe'. James Radley, Bill Moorehouse, who afterwards won a posthumous V.C., Cecil Grace, Douglas Gilmour and, a little later, Tommy Sopwith, the now famous maker of the Sopwith and Hawker machines, were all essaying a first flight. At Cricklewood, Handley Page was on the same tack. The only reason I was the first to fly there was because I had the only machine that *could* fly. Even then it was difficult to do more than a straight line, because in turning one lost so much flying speed that one invariably made a forced landing in the sewage farm.

Great days those, until one by one my friends vanished; the new invention was taking its toll of life.

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Then, in 1912, I took up ballooning. This was and is a wonderful sport. It is out of fashion at present, but I feel it may come back some day in one form or another. It is so blissfully peaceful and warm compared with flying, and if you are a true aeronaut the navigation is extremely interesting.

Whilst on the subject of flying, I might add that after a lapse of twenty-two years I went up the other day at Hatfield. The sensation was entirely novel to me. The machine was small—a D.H. Moth—and the day was very bumpy and I did not feel at all comfortable. I'm afraid your father is getting old.

Now we come to racing. I don't suppose for a moment you'll be in a position to own race-horses while you're young. Only young men who are left a lot of money by their fathers can indulge such expensive tastes. A very horsey man who used to train for me once gave me some excellent advice. 'Don't back other people's horses,' he used to say. 'It's difficult enough to know when your own are going to win.'

Subsequent events proved him right. During the flat season of 1911 I had six horses in training and won five races. Backing them carefully

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on my trainer's advice I made a lot of money. At the end of the season, however, I lost my head and started backing other people's. Everything came unstuck, including 'odds on' chances, and in three days I lost all I had made and a bit more. It was disastrous, but it taught me never to back horses again. There is no harm in having a small bet on the Derby or the National, but do not try betting consistently, for it is utterly stupid. I know what I am talking about, so please take my warning. There are many owners and some trainers as straight as a die, but in other respects it is crooked from top to bottom. Another sweeping assertion backed by personal experience.

Hunting is a different matter, as the monetary element is absent. It is essentially a sporting occupation when the going is fast and the jumps are big. I used to be very keen on it before the War, and I know of no greater thrill than taking a good line across big grassy country. After the War, however, I began to look at it from other angles. It seemed to me a cruel thing to chase a wretched little animal for hours with a pack of yelping hounds; to catch it when utterly exhausted and to tear it limb from limb for the edification of a lot of monied and rather useless people.

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The same remarks apply to shooting. I may be unnecessarily finical about these things, but if animals must be killed I don't want to take part in it, and in any event I cannot now derive any fun from it. You may feel differently.

Card-playing for money is akin to racing. A game like bridge that depends largely on skill is one thing, but chemin de fer, baccarat, trente-et-quarante and, to a lesser extent, poker are best left severely alone. Although I have studied these games scientifically, I have in my time, particularly when young, lost thousands at them. I am now a wiser man, and if I play at all, which is a rare occurrence, I have myself well under control.

Yachting and speed-boating are also very expensive pursuits and are therefore unlikely to come your way. I have never done much of either myself, perhaps because I have never taken kindly to the sea. It is for this reason, also, that I am a poor swimmer. When a little chap at my first Public School I used to wander down the hill with the other boys to the school's famous swimming-bath. But little boys who couldn't swim had a bad time, for it was the custom for the bigger boys to duck their heads and hold them under. When, at that age, your

lungs become filled with water and you are made to retch and gasp for breath, you are not likely ever to forget it or to become enamoured of the sea when grown up. But your mother, being Australian, is a strong swimmer, and from all appearances you are going to take after her and not me in that respect.

A final word to terminate this chapter. Whatever game you may be playing, play it only for the sport of the thing—for the game's sake. Before the War England was invincible in almost every field of sport. Now, however, other nations have caught us up and overtaken us. But other nations look at sport from quite a different viewpoint. They make a business of it and go in for intensive training in a professional sense. We play for the joy of playing; they—particularly the Americans—play to win and are sometimes not too particular as to the methods they adopt.

The British people are the pioneers of sport, but have always kept it as a side issue in their daily lives. Let it remain so. When you win, win with modesty. When you lose, do it with a smile.



## IX

### *On Politics*

NO sooner had I written the heading to this chapter than I began wondering why I felt I wanted to talk to you so much about politics. As your Canadian great-grandfather was in the Ottawa Parliament, your grandfather, Theodore, was one of the most prominent Liberals of his day, your Uncle Geoffrey is at present a Liberal Member, and I am hoping to be in the House shortly myself, I suppose politics are in our blood. Hence, I suppose, my wish to interest you.

In addition to this, I am convinced that every one should be made politically conscious. On the face of it this seems a condition difficult of achievement, and it is not within the province of this book that I should attempt a solution. But as far as it is within my power to teach you the rudiments of British Citizenship I intend to

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do so. In the meantime I see no reason why a course of elementary non-party politics, constituting a survey of contemporary history both internal and international, should not be included in the curriculum of our National and other schools. It is obvious that something of this sort must be undertaken before very long; how, otherwise, can any system of electoral democracy be coherent? How can it be anything but an expression of mass hysteria or, alternately, mass apathy?

'The voice of the people' is a slogan irresistible in its appeal to the sense of equity within us; at any rate, within those of us who believe in majority government. Its incisiveness cuts through the prejudices of party. But the voice of the people as pronounced through the ballot-box today is both meaningless in expression and pathetic in its ignorance. It is as valueless and heart-rending as the cry of a woman in childbirth; a spasm of agonized emotion obtaining its impetus in the desire for relief.

The subject is not only a vital one for us Britishers. The whole world is being governed by a collective opinion which has no understanding of the issues at stake. In the years since the War alternate waves of patriotic and anti-

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patriotic hysteria have swept across a suffering universe, sometimes erecting dynasties, sometimes demolishing them. This irresponsible condition has been exploited both honestly and unscrupulously for personal and political ends. Whereas we must assume, however much we may dislike their behaviour, that Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler were inspired by honest, impersonal, if fanatical motives, the same cannot be said of other European statesmen, not excluding English ones.

Now, on reading through the above I find my pen has already rather run away with me. My style has become noticeably heavy and pretentious. It is more appropriate to an article in a political quarterly than to an informative colloquy with a young man of eighteen or twenty, the age at which I should like you first to read this chapter. I don't even know whether an attempt to explain the delusion of so-called democratic government is a suitable thesis with which to start our talk. I seem to have drifted into it. Let us start again.

'No society can surely be flourishing and happy of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable.' It is now 160 years since Adam Smith wrote this in his *Wealth*

*of Nations.* It is a truism so obvious as to be almost puerile. It does not need a Communist or a Socialist to convince us of a patent fact, this fact so patent that the most die-hard Tory would not dare to contradict it.

One hundred and sixty years ago: of course we have progressed since then. Following a series of successful battles at the beginning of the nineteenth century, England embarked on the most prosperous period of her history. With the invention of the steam-engine and its application to manufacture she built up the finest industrial system in the world. Her Navy became double the strength of any other Navy. Britannia ruled the waves. Her merchant fleet increased a hundredfold. She became embarrassingly prolific and bred colonial children by the dozen. Her prestige was unassailable. Pitt, Canning, Peel, Palmerston, Melbourne, Derby, Disraeli, Gladstone, Salisbury, some of the greatest names in English history, lent their hands to the social and economic amelioration of their country. During the Victorian era England rose steadily on a crescendo of prestige and prosperity to be the envy of the world.

And yet, if we look under the surface today, if we examine statistics, what do we learn about

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her people? (Is it a coincidence that as I write in front of my fire a man standing outside in the frozen gutter is playing 'Land of Hope and Glory' on his trumpet?) As I was saying, if we look under the surface, what do we find? We will discover that in the year 1933 there were approximately three million people without any work at all, without any means of subsistence. The majority of these people are only prevented from dying by the receipt of a meagre allowance from a State already overburdened with colossal indebtedness. There are hundreds of thousands of these, however, who have no money at all and do not draw the dole, so they live (or die) in infirmaries and other public institutions or else share the pittance of their penurious relations and friends.

In addition to these unfortunates there are a further ten million people living from hand to mouth on the verge of the abyss, people who may be in work but who are subject to the caprices of economics and therefore to instant dismissal. They are unable to buy enough food to keep themselves healthy and strong, and only with difficulty manage to keep body and soul together. Their homes are known as slums and are akin to pigsties.

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Then we will find that another twenty million are more or less poor. These people may attend the cinema once a week after they have paid their rent and bought the bare necessities of life. They have only a modicum of comfort. There are then four million people who are comfortably off, and a final two per cent who are very rich.

This latter fraction may be divided into two classes: the large property-owners, gentry of ancient lineage whose ancestors came by their enormous possessions by processes both fortuitous, feudatory and fantastic: and the men of big business, men of brains, ability and avarice who control the destinies of the working classes mentioned above. For the most part these wealthy people are being heavily taxed and, in the case of the business men at any rate, it would be unfair to lay the blame for the country's parlous social condition entirely at their door. If I tell you that of the forty-five million people in the British Isles forty-three million own no land, you will, perhaps, the better appreciate the true position.

It will be observed, then, that Adam Smith's words written nearly two centuries ago are not dated, and that they may be applied to the

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conditions obtaining today with equal facility and truth.

Who, then, is to blame for this disgraceful state of affairs? Is it the governing classes or the workers themselves? If the truth must be told, they are both responsible.

In the year 1215 King John signed the Magna Charta. By this edict the supremacy of the law was established over the will of the monarch. In 1258, during the reign of Henry III, Parliamentary government was first established in England, and for the last eight hundred years the country has been governed by what are known as the governing classes—that two per cent about whom we spoke a moment ago. Sometimes they have been called Whigs and Tories, sometimes Liberals and Conservatives, sometimes Unionists, sometimes Radicals, and sometimes feudal barons. But call them what you will, they were the monied ones, the privileged few.

Until 1867 the working classes were not allowed a vote. They were to all intents and purposes the agricultural and industrial vassals of the business and feudal overlords. In that year, however, owing to the pressure brought by Mr. Gladstone's opposition, the Conservatives,

led by Sir Robert Peel, were compelled to introduce the Reform Bill, which measure purported to incorporate the workers within the franchise.

In fact it did, but with what result? Those 'voiceless millions', as John Bright had called them, now had a voice, but it had been stilled for so long that they did not know how to use it. It took them forty years to form a Parliamentary Labour Party and, up to the time of writing, they have not succeeded in placing a Labour Government in power, being obtuse or content or perhaps sensible enough to return at every General Election a majority of those opulent mugwumps who for countless generations had adorned the ministerial benches.

This furnishes a fitting commentary to the contention I made in the beginning of this chapter—that the electorate, being for the most part politically ignorant, are unable to express themselves coherently. Democratic government is therefore a mockery.

Now the object of these notes is, first, as I have said, to give you a general outline of political England; secondly, to give you briefly my views in summary; and thirdly, to help you to decide with whom you are going to throw in your lot if you should ever decide seriously to



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enter politics. Are you going to be on the side of the underdog or are you going to support those whose record of State control you are able to examine? Let me tell you, however, right away, that unless you are possessed of outstanding ability, financial independence and a dogged determination, you cannot hope to attain any prominence. On the other hand, if ability is your only attribute, but you are prepared to submit to a regimen of hypocrisy, intrigue, coercion, trickery, and bluff, then you will be marked out by your Party headquarters for early promotion.

It may be that these questionable means justify the end—that is a matter for your own conscience. For success in English politics is well nigh impossible without the backing of a Party. To obtain this you must proclaim yourself in accord with the rules, regulations, shibboleths, and other manifestos laid down by the Party Potentates. Having obtained nomination by thus acknowledging subservience to their dogma, you will be expected to preach palpable ineptitudes and make platform promises which you will be neither able nor willing to carry out. But in return for these services you will receive their moral and material support,

also a telegram from the leader of the Party on the eve of the poll wishing you good luck. If it is your fate to be elected you will be cheered by the other cynics as you walk up the floor of the House to take the oath. Thenceforward you will be a cog in the Party machine. You will be told how and when to vote, and any display of independence will incur the displeasure of the powers that rule your political destiny. You will therefore gather that the Party system as practised in the mother of Parliaments is a nefarious one, provocative of dishonesty and in no way consistent with accurate representation.

My own experience is illuminating. Reared from the age of nine in institutions which catered for the sons of gentlemen, I was for twelve years in contact only with that complacent mentality which presumes the superiority of the upper classes. And when eventually I was designated 'young man' and projected into the outside world I was quite unable to see under the surface, to see things as they really were. The result was that for a number of years I accepted the theory prevalent among my friends that there must always be the rich and the poor; that one was, of course, sorry for the poor, but it was merely a question of what one was used to.

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Reduced to its logical but rather unpleasant dimensions, this meant that millionaires must be retained as such because they were used to their opulence, and that people who were starving could with impunity be left to starve because they also were used to it. Then came the War, and I perforce mingled with the poor who were then in uniform.

For the first time in my life I had a chance of getting to know these people and of appraising the stuff of which they were made. The more I became acquainted with their true characters, the more did my blood boil with indignation at the thought of their lot in life. I determined the moment the War was over to devote myself to their cause.

In 1920 I took a course of public speaking at the Polytechnic and joined the Labour Party. For some years I read Socialistic literature and gave the benefit of it to gaping crowds at election times.

But all the time that I was working ardently for the Labour Party there were certain official attitudes about which I could get no satisfactory explanation. For instance, I could not understand the Party's attitude towards the Empire. Not only were they apathetic about

it, but for them it did not seem to exist. I simply could not understand why they should profess more concern about an Argentino or a Japanese than about an Australian, Canadian or South African. It seemed like preferring someone else's children to one's own. Again, avowing as they did this great brotherly feeling for the Dago and the Jap, how was it that they were prepared to promote the interests of his employer by declaring that his sweated goods could come free of duty into this country? Surely this was putting a premium on industrial slavery with the inevitable result of lowering the wage standard in this country? In other words, by supporting Free Imports without Free Trade they were taking advantage of wage conditions in other countries which they so readily deprecated in this, i.e. sweated labour; fostering foreign competitive employment while our workers were thrown upon the streets in increasing numbers. It seemed, therefore, to me that their much-vaunted international bias would not bear examination. Until one day it dawned upon me that their hatred of the type of Victorian Imperialism that had been instrumental in acquiring the Empire dominated every other aspect of the case. Then it was that

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I realized what a formidable task lay ahead: to break down that prejudice and to convince Labour of the enormous field for progressive Socialism that lay open to them in the proper organization of the British Commonwealth.

But to be out of sympathy with the Labour Party on this point does not mean that I am out of sympathy with them on the main issues. The cause of the underdog is a burning one and once alight in the heart is not easily extinguished. There have been more martyrs in the cause of the poverty-stricken, the humble and the meek, than there have in the cause of patriotism; and Christ was not the first. A more equal distribution of the abstract and concrete things this world has to offer—or Socialism, to give it its political designation—is a magnificent undertaking, a great and inspiring mission, and now the torch is afire it cannot be quenched until its light is shining from the topmost beacon in the land. It is a glorious battle and one that I hope you, my son, will carry on.

Some time ago a close relation of ours said, 'Lionel is only a Socialist because he has nothing to lose.' This, of course, may be true, just as true as if I had made the profound remark that he was only a Capitalist because he had

everything to lose. On several occasions my friends have said to me, 'You—a Socialist: you ought to be ashamed of yourself.' When I have asked why I should feel ashamed they have replied, 'It's such a let-down for your class!' This incident will indicate more clearly than anything else I might say how utterly unable is the average Capitalist to understand the feeling behind the Labour Movement. As if one's class were of the slightest account where the fate of millions of one's countrymen is concerned.

I have a friend prominent in the Labour Movement who has fought four or five elections in constituencies where Labour's chances were absolutely nil. One day I asked him if it were not time he were given a safe seat.

'Well,' he said, 'I don't mind fighting forlorn hopes. If I manage to increase the Labour vote I'm satisfied.'

To us of the Left, politics are not a career as in the case of the older parties. They are a consuming passion, founded on altruism and prosecuted with religious fervour.

Now let us for a moment take a broader canvas and look at England in its relationship to the rest of the world. At the moment of writing there are in the world upwards of thirty million

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white people without work: I will not include the coloured races, as their standard of living is entirely different. This means that there are thirty million white people, most of whom are without money. In the case of England and one or two other countries these wretched people are kept alive by a Government grant, but in the less fortunate countries they subsist on charity.

We are told by various professors in political economy that the world is suffering from over-production—that there is a glut of commodities. I suppose there is one thing worse than a glut, and that is a famine. On the other hand, when I read that thousands of tons of coffee are being burned in Brazil, that hundreds of thousands of tons of sugar are rotting in store, and that millions of bushels of wheat are being withheld from distribution either because the producers of the said commodities cannot sell them at a profit or because the city speculators are withholding supplies, then, with the starving millions in mind, I ask myself whether the criminal incompetence of National Governments and their economic advisers is not a worse visitation than either famine or glut.

One cannot look at the economic condition of the world today without realizing that we

innocents have been led into a morass from which it will be very difficult to extricate ourselves. The more we think of our present financial and economic pundits with their warring theories the more it is apparent that they are not going to be the ones to do it. The world is sick and tired of listening to oft-reiterated panaceas emanating from the various strongholds of hypocrisy and self-interestedness. I am not an economist and have therefore the advantage of being an onlooker, and it seems to me, as a man of ordinary common sense, that the whole economic structure of the world is out of date. It is one thing to accept certain principles and find them efficacious during the process of turning the world from an agricultural planet into an industrial one, but it is quite another thing to apply the same principles after the world has, in fact, become industrialized. There is not an important country in the world today that is predominantly agrarian, whereas a hundred years ago the reverse was the case.

The crux of the matter is this: that, while the production of essential commodities is of secondary importance to the making of a profit, so long will the people of the world want for food, clothes and shelter. To be more succinct, pro-



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duction, under the Capitalist system, is a by-product of money-making, and as long as this condition obtains the majority will suffer in subservience to a privileged few.

When I look into the future, then, not the distant Wellsian future but the future of the next ten or twenty years, I can see no permanent relief in sight. There will be tides of increasing prosperity, but as long as the world continues to operate on the shores of diseased principles, so long will the ebb follow the flow. England is a country of tradition and conservatism. She does not lightly overthrow her leaders, however badly they have failed. Other countries are not so particular, but they are in bondage to a banking system which has become a fetish.

In the absence, then, of an escape by naturally progressive means there must be a general upheaval. What form this will take is not certain, but I do not, like some others, think in terms of international war. We shall experience, more likely, and perhaps by the time you read these notes, a simultaneous uprising of the masses in every suffering country—civil war the world over. It will be, unlike most revolutions, a revolution of the majority. Those thirty starving millions will initiate a reign of riot, pillage,

and perhaps murder. The Governor of the Bank of England, who represents the interests of the masses of our England with such genius and sympathy, will be thrown over the bulwarks of an Atlantic liner. But this blessed country of ours, for ever tolerant and slow to move, may otherwise escape. (I think Karl Marx, who specialized in revolutionary ideas, was of this opinion.) Then, only then, when we have demolished the false premises on which the world is at present tottering, when outworn theories have been swept away, shall we be able to start building afresh with a revaluation of the universe and the issue of a new international currency and creed. Only then will it be possible to tackle the question of distribution, for that is the keynote to the whole trouble—congested areas here, empty spaces there; abundance here, starvation there; wealth here, poverty there; work here, unemployment there; education here, illiteracy there—and so on.

The prophecy of a world revolution is not new. It has been shouted for years from Communist platforms. But I am no tub-thumper and I have no sympathy with Communism. I do not think that the proletariat will ever take charge of the world. I hope not, as I am against

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class rule of any kind. Trustified Capitalism with all its injustices is tolerated in normal times because it manages to afford a man a living. In bad times, however, like these in which I write, millions starve and hold it responsible. There is a limit to endurance and I feel that limit is near at hand.

The belief in a universal catastrophe is strengthened when we consider the rapid march of science. Labour-saving inventions are being perfected every year, every month. More men are therefore being thrown out of work. The purchasing power of the masses is becoming smaller whilst production increases. When we remember side by side with these facts that the population of the world is rapidly increasing, we may well ask what is going to be the end of it all. Civilization as we know it is in jeopardy. Is it worth fostering?

To return to things more present, you will have gathered that in all eventualities I am first a Briton. Oliver Baldwin always accuses me of waving the red flag in one hand and the Union Jack in the other. I applaud the metaphor and admit the allegation. Why should I be ashamed? There is so much to be done for our own people that I cannot, as things are at

present, find it in me to cry about the foreigner. I am a Socialist, but unlike some of my colleagues in the Socialist Party I am a National Socialist in the literal sense of the word as opposed to the International brand. To me the latter are but noble theorists.

With this in mind, I would like before closing this chapter to give you my views about that Commonwealth of British peoples called the Empire of which I have already spoken. When you have read more, you will perhaps realize that my conception of our Empire is not that of either the Labour, the Liberal, or Conservative Parties; neither is it that of Lord Beaverbrook, that relentlessly Imperial mosquito, who, whether you agree with him or not, is the only public man since Chamberlain to see the Empire in a grand perspective and who continues to propound his convictions regardless of popularity. Like most Conservatives, he is rich, but unlike most—independent. He does not seek the sweets of political office. There are many in his party who would like to come out into the open and side with him, but they are too cowardly. They know that his name is anathema to the Central Office. They therefore resent his ubiquitous propaganda as boys in a

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school are abashed when they are found out but are not punished. But his Lordship will never get the bulk of the electorate interested in their Empire by talking solely about fiscal adjustment. It must be tackled from another angle, from an angle which will appeal to the working man and which he can readily understand. Both Mussolini and Hitler have had to compromise with Socialism in order to gain the support of the masses.

As for the Labour Party, I have already mentioned their apathy. This is not only an attitude of defeatism, but a blunder of incalculable dimensions. It is they who hold the key to the position; nothing can be done without their organized co-operation. This vast portion of the earth's surface exists under the British flag and will not be blotted out by aping the antics of an ostrich. Something constructive must be done. I have for years been writing and speaking on this subject, but as my ideas conflict with all the powers that be, mine has been a still small voice crying in a wilderness of dun-derheads and vested interests. But, my boy, mark my words, sooner or later, probably by the time you read these lines, the policy which I advocate now will be adopted, as surely as

this printed page is black and white. It is not clever, only common sense. Its trend is inescapably Socialistic.

Firstly, the working man must be told the truth about the Empire. He must be told that it is composed of various countries that have been acquired through a process of discovery, invasion, and bloody conquest by the common man, i.e. the sailor and soldier, albeit at the behest of capitalistic and predatory Governments.

He must be told that these countries, particularly the white Dominions, were then populated almost entirely by the working classes, the only people of the upper classes who graced the Colonies being the black sheep who had previously *disgraced* the country of their birth. He must then be told that the development and administration of the Dominions overseas was and is being carried out almost entirely by people who are or were of his own class; that the Empire is a monument to the enterprise and efficiency of the common people; that far from being a playground for Capitalists it is a playground for the proletariat, and they must claim it without delay. They must combine with their own kith, kin, and class and cultivate their garden to their own advantage. There

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must be the closest affiliation between the trade unions of the mother country and those of the Dominions and Colonies.

Up till now the Tory Party have presumed a proprietary right over the Empire in the manner of absentee landlordism, and have looked with arrogant condescension at Colonials because they were 'such common people' and did not speak with Oxford accents. But even snob-bishness has its two points of view. 'Australia, oh yes, that's where we send our convicts,' said an Englishman many years ago. 'England,' said an Australian, 'oh yes, that's where the convicts come from.'

Now, it's all very well to say 'claim the Empire without delay', but how is it to be done? Our indigents cannot in a moment overthrow a Capitalist Government and take the reins of office. They cannot embark in their hundreds of thousands for the far corners of the earth without provision having been made for their arrival and without the approval of the countries concerned. No. If any organic edifice is to be achieved in this Commonwealth of British Peoples our path lies in the economic co-operation of its various units. With this in view, I would, like Lord Beaverbrook, first effect an

almost impenetrable tariff barrier around the whole Empire. If we can buy beef from Australia and Canada I would prohibit its importation from the Argentine. If we can buy coffee from Kenya and Jamaica I would bar it from Brazil. If the Sudan can supply us with our cotton I would exclude its importation from America. In like manner and in reciprocation the Dominions would be asked and would undoubtedly agree to buy their iron, steel and coal from the mother country. It will be a matter of some difficulty and of infinite adjustment. But to say that it cannot be accomplished is supposing something contrary to nature and is an admission of incompetence. The *quid pro quo* is unassailably strong without the necessity of introducing the element of sentimental inclination.

By way of combating the natural tendency of such a tariff ring, there must be inter-Governmental control of prices. This was carried out during the War and we have this experience from which to benefit. But the various States must not only control prices, they must not only take over distribution: *they must control production, too*. There must be State purchase of essential commodities at prices fair to the producer, and State control of distribution at prices



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fair to the retailer and consumer. This procedure could be accomplished by a Central Commonwealth Control Board consisting of representatives from all the countries concerned. An enormous saving could be effected by eliminating the middleman. In the meantime, the coloured countries which at present comprise the Colonies proper should be progressively emancipated in the direction of self-government and eventually handed back to the natives from whom they were originally stolen.

Later on, as things developed, the Inter-Commonwealth Governments would become the owners of large tracts of land and of factories which would supply them with the commodities essential to the comfortable existence of their respective peoples. These articles would be marketed by the States both by means of sale to private retailers and through a chain of shops throughout the land. They would not seek to undersell the private tradesman, but all profit would be returned to registered members in ratio to their annual purchases. In other words, the Empire would be linked and served by an organization almost identical with the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and eventually millions of people would have a stake in the

Commonwealth. The whole scheme will cost a vast amount of money, particularly in solving the problem of congested areas and empty spaces—distribution of populace, healthy and happy settlement. I cannot think, however, that the expense will be either so great, so unproductive or so demoralizing as the one thousand million we have spent since the War in unemployment benefit.

All this, of course, goes much further than Lord Beaverbrook and people of his sort are prepared to go. But although it is pure unadulterated Socialism, it is a National Socialism in the true and best sense of the word; a kind which is not yet officially recognized by the Labour Party. They are hoping for the day when all the countries of the world will be federated in one objective comity. To my way of thinking that day is far distant; the idea is fraught with titanic difficulties. But what finer opportunity could be found to demonstrate Socialist principles than to federate first this Commonwealth of British Peoples—people who for the most part speak our own language, who think as we do, whose psychology is the same, whose history is the same, whose sentiment is the same, whose standards of morality and

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honour are the same. There is no Capitalist exploitation in that, nothing of thieving avarice. It is, surely, true statesmanlike Socialism with a new orientation—an example to the world.

The British Empire is many times greater than any other empire the world has known. It is entirely self-supporting or could be made so in a very short time. Co-ordination is all that is lacking, but this cannot be carried out on Capitalist lines. To consolidate the Commonwealth on Co-operative principles for the benefit of the British Peoples is the only possible method.

I would ask you then, Theo, to give this matter your earnest attention. It may be that by the time you are grown up this viewpoint of mine may have taken shape. But if not, and you are going to interest yourself in the welfare of your less fortunate compatriots, then I beg you to give serious thought to this problem of Empire.

‘To bring a fair share of comfort, contentment and happiness among the great body of the people’, to quote John Bright’s words, is a worthy aim. To place them in possession of this great heritage which has come their way and to distribute it with equity is surely the best way of carrying it out.

## X

### *On Sexual Morality*

**W**e have seen in the previous chapters how the minds and activities of peoples have changed during the post-War years. But in no direction has the change been so marked as in the sphere of intersexual relationship. That the movement has been a retrograde one cannot be doubted. I am aware of the unconvincing platitudes anent 'sex freedom' and 'progressive thought' which are offered as excuses, but to a person of my age, in a position to compare the pre- and post-War decades, these arguments are as feeble as the morals of the people who utter them.

We were not all saints before the War—there were plenty of sinners, and I was one of them. But, however shameful our antics, there was always a limit, a sphere into which we did not

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take them. That frontier may best be described as the point at which our impropriety commenced encroaching upon the inherent respect men had for women.

Today no province seems to be revered. The cheap vulgarity and coarseness of the modern young person is ubiquitous. Romance and decent sentiment seem to be dying; the mystery of woman, vanishing. We can only pray that this salaciousness is but a phase. This hope is lent support because the premises are false and artificial and are foreign to nature's purity. In view of this we may soon revert to an era of decorum, in which the lovely facts of human association and affection assert themselves once more.

You see, I am one of those dodo-esque people who believe that the social texture of civilized communities finds its inspiration in the virtue of its women. Perhaps I should rather say that the surest indication of a nation's moral integrity is to be found in the comportment of its womanhood. They are the mothers of the future generations and upon their conduct, more than upon any other factor, depends the welfare of human races. This applies as much to the Polynesian as to the Parisians, as much to Laplanders as to Londoners.

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It is for this reason then, if for no other, that I deplore the fashionable tendency to desecrate moral standards that have taken centuries to build up, the tendency to expose woman to sexual ugliness.

It has been a common thing to make the War the scapegoat for everything unpleasant that has occurred in the last fifteen years. It was in itself such a heinous sin that the excuse has been an ever-ready one. We may blame the War, if we wish, for our delinquencies in this respect too, but we shall only be reiterating a tiresome platitude without vindicating ourselves. No, the blatant search for cheap sensation which is apparent in contemporary life, the glorification of coarseness which is exemplified, above all, in our public entertainment, are things that strike at the vitals of our country, things that make for national disintegration—one need not quote Greek and Roman history to prove that. Whilst talking of public entertainment, let me show you what I mean.

It is no over-statement to say that I am frankly shocked at many of the current plays and films which, largely from a feeling of professional duty, I make a point of seeing. I don't think I am alone in this. I think, rather, that I am

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one of many millions whose voice has been overwhelmed by the clatter of the barker and a complaisant Censor.

In the past few months I have seen five successful plays and many unsuccessful ones. Of the five successful ones only one proved the kind of show to which I would have liked to have taken a young girl. And yet in each case the stalls were crammed with men and women of the upper classes, apparently eager addicts to the charms of pornography and moral putrefaction.

One of these plays was by a fashionable and brilliant young Englishman, a man who has proved himself capable of work of deeply moving sincerity and charm. The first act was to my mind one of the finest pieces of writing the contemporary theatre can boast. In the second act, however, the leading man and woman sprawled about the sofa, floor and other pieces of furniture in the kind of intimate embrace that I thought was usually reserved for the darkness of a curtained bedroom. I found it hotmaking to a degree, but the West End house went into ecstasies over it. I cannot believe and sincerely hope the provincial audiences did not react in the same way.

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In another play the plot, if such it can be called, was concerned with the attempt on the part of an innocent girl of eighteen to seduce an effeminate dago three times her age. We were regaled with the sight of this kid being undressed and helped into her silk pyjamas by the dago who was already in his. And the scene was laid in a room over a speakeasy in New York. Yes, like most of this foul stuff, the play was American.

In another play, it seemed that everyone was actively concerned with blackmail, graft, profanity, adultery, suicide, and murder. In a large cast of about twenty players, there was not a single character who was not engaged in one of these praiseworthy objects. The sweet young heroine who flourished a revolver was illegitimate and her mother was a murderess. As for the dialogue, quite one-third was vilely coarse and unprintable. Altogether a most delectable entertainment!

A young girl cousin of yours, who shall be nameless, was with me. In the interval she turned to me and said, 'Are there nothing but murderers in America?' A puerile question perhaps, but how was I to answer it? 'I don't know,' I replied evasively, but I might more



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truthfully have said, 'Oh no, there are also blackmailers, seducers, cardsharps, and every other form of thug.' What an advertisement for that country! What poison for our youngsters!

Although the Americans started this vogue for prurience, the English playwrights are fast catching them up. I cannot begin to understand the Censor's attitude. And if I feel embarrassed at this sort of stuff, many others must feel the same. People don't like being shocked. Perhaps managers who talk of the dying theatre will eventually realize this obvious fact. Maugham, Shaw, and Shakespeare are all daring at times, but they are never shocking or revolting, nor do they hurl it at you inartistically.

But if the theatre is to be criticized, the cinema cannot escape its share of responsibility. Here is an institution which is not patronized by a few thousand who can select their entertainment, but by twenty million people per week in the United Kingdom alone, who have it selected for them. The fare it offers is not perhaps so regardless of propriety, but its influence is infinitely greater. Again, it is the Americans who are the chief offenders. The vast majority of its patrons are women and young girls—shopgirls, factory girls, and stenographers—a horrible thought.

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The Bishop of Blackburn made a speech a short time ago in which he dealt with the subject very incisively. He said:

'Every big city must have its main sewer which removes all beastliness, but that is not the section of a town's welfare to which we give particular attention. We do not sit around it and enjoy it. Sometimes I feel that the modern novelist and film producer do sit around and enjoy it.'

British producers have recently proved, however, that a clean picture need not necessarily be a dull one.

As regards you, Theo, your mother and I are being very careful about what films you see. You told me yesterday that you did not like films with love stories. This, of course, is natural at your age. At present you prefer 'Tarzan' and 'King of the Jungle' and 'Dick Turpin'. But in any event I shall not let you go freely to the theatre or cinema until you are quite grown up unless the character of entertainment alters. Nothing would induce me to expose your active little mind to dreadful fare of the sort I have mentioned. I want my boy to be high-minded and not a hooligan. I want him during his impressionable years to see the decency in life, for

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he will meet plenty of the sordid and vulgar afterwards. He must not be taught by unscrupulous entertainment-mongers that the world is populated by low people. It is not true. There is good and bad in all of us, but the good will always predominate if only it gets a chance to develop and show itself.

The trouble is that millions of people are living thwarted lives. Particularly is this so with the poor and under-nourished. Every one has something good and constructive to give the world, but how often does it get a chance to see the sun; How often?

Before leaving this chapter I want to talk to you about a subject which is very difficult to discuss in black and white on account of its filthy nature, but which, owing to its prevalence to-day, cannot be baulked. It is a significant commentary on modern 'progress' that present-day 'Society' experiences no such abashment. It is even made the subject of popular entertainment.

I have before me a cutting from an evening paper. It says:

'If productions are not subjected to a more rigorous censorship I fear that a certain type of human frailty and abnormality will form the

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basis of unsavoury 'jokes' among schoolchildren. Young people are to be found in every audience and they are entitled to be protected . . . this humour is repugnant to the vast majority of theatre-goers. . . . I leave this matter to the Censor, to the West End managers and authors, and lastly to decent playgoers who will express their views by staying away from the box-office.'

I must join issue with this writer on two points. Homosexuality is not a human frailty or an abnormality in nine cases out of ten. I was told recently by a famous medical man, a friend of mine who has specialized in this direction, that he can only remember two cases in the whole of his experience which could be considered pathological. For the rest his 'patients' were young decadents who came to consult him and make admissions as a sort of insurance against a possible prosecution by the police at some future date. So whatever case there may be for the genuines there can be no possible excuse for their satellites, who comprise the vast majority. It is with them a cult, revived within recent years by a nucleus of mentally deformed people who usually try to besmear the good name of Art in an effort to justify their depravity.

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It is a form of intellectual snobbery, an affectation of degeneracy and the most abandoned form of sexual realization. It is a practice so vile as to defy suitable description.

The other point on which this critic is wrong is in his assumption that the matter can be left to the Censor, the West End managers, and the authors to rectify.

As far as the Censor is concerned, he has already proved himself complacent in the matter, so we can look for no help there, but anyone with a knowledge of theatrical circles will confirm that several of the West End managers are themselves of this breed. In fact I know of cases where a healthy young actor has been unable to obtain a job because he was not 'like that'. Decent managers, on the other hand, are disgusted by the fact that they are often unable to find a manly young actor for a certain part. As a producer myself, I can substantiate this.

As regards authors, the position is yet worse. I have just jotted down at random the names of twenty of the most successful writers of the present day, and to my certain knowledge twelve of these are sexual perverts. If these human slugs were confined to the artistic professions they would at least be partially segregated, but this

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is not the case. Before the War, disciples of this hideous cult were few and far between and made some attempt to hide their shame. If they did not they were either ostracized into obscurity or confined in Reading Gaol. Now, however, they are not only boastful, but no smart society function, no cocktail party, is complete without their miasmatic witticisms.

This much, however, may be said in mitigation: that if the charge of emasculating Britain's manhood had to be preferred against someone, it would be the millions of well-meaning but misguided women, the parental guardians of our little boys, who might have to face it first. For, however natural the desire to indulge a child may be, it is undoubtedly prompted by the selfish longing to satiate the maternal instinct, and when carried to excess results, as in other things, in harmful consequences. Unless a boy is very normally constituted he may give way irretrievably to the softness of his mother's arms.

It is now twenty years since the Great War started—twenty years since husbands, brothers and fathers started on that long trail from which so many of them did not return. Thus bereft, it was perhaps natural that the mothers, wives and

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sisters clung desperately to what was left to them. They lavished on their sons, in addition to their rightful share, that quota of affection which in other circumstances would have been their fathers'. These little boys, then in their nursery, were pampered, petted and spoilt to an extent bordering on hysteria. During the war years they were surrounded morning, noon and night by loving women, so that familiarity with that sex made them contemptuous of their caresses. When it was over, many of these children began to regard their fathers as a myth because, either for reasons of death or estrangement, they did not come back.

Today those boys are in their twenties and early thirties. The weaker amongst them have assimilated their mothers' effeminacy because whatever manliness they possessed could not withstand that terrific onslaught of mother love.

And so we see them every day, chiefly in the West End of London, those sexual intermediates embodying the most characteristic phenomena of degeneration. Poor creatures! A few judicious kicks from the other boys, a few lickings from the masters and a little fatherly authority would have preserved both their manhood and their manners. The young people of today have

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grown to accept them as a providential joke. By all means let them be ridiculed out of existence, but healthy-minded people should not be subjected to contamination through the medium of social gatherings and public entertainment.

Frankly, Theo, I am terrified for you lest some influence, perhaps psychological and beyond my control, should contrive to alter you. To show you how strongly I feel about the matter, I would sooner you had never been born rather than that you should develop these despicable tendencies which appeal only to the dross of generative effort. It is of course a criminal offence, this type of bestiality, and the Recorder of the Old Bailey expressed his views on the matter recently when he sent thirty of them to hard labour.

Now let us leave this sordid topic. Let us leave this chapter and get some fresh air. It had to be written because I don't want you to grow up accepting things like this as an inevitable part of one's daily life. You will, I expect, feel like me and William Cowper when he wrote, 'I cannot talk with civet in the room, a fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume.'

I suppose if this book is eventually published there will be some readers who will say, 'The



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man's obviously a hypocrite, narrow-minded, puritanical, suburban, insular or old-fashioned; but the rest of my talks with you should prove that I am not. I abominate hypocrisy, I do not often go to church, I have never lived in the suburbs, and have spent half my life travelling about the world.

However, it may be that to the charge of being old-fashioned I must plead guilty—but I do so without apology. For if to be fashionable I must prefer salaciousness to sentiment, hobnob with perverts, and laugh when a pretty girl tells a dirty story (a common occurrence nowadays), then I am content to wallow in the accusation. In a varied existence I have wandered quite frequently from the proverbial narrow path, but I have managed to retain a certain self-respect, and there are limits beyond which self-respecting people do not travel. As I have said, these limits are difficult of delineation; somehow one just knows instinctively when they are reached.

So when you sin yourself, my boy, as I suppose you will, see to it that your indiscretions are private, that your intimacies remain personal and your memories of them decent.

## XI

### *On the Arts*

John Stuart Mill once said, 'Art proposes to itself an end and looks out for means to effect it.'

Mill was a philosopher, a man of letters and altogether a very erudite person. As I am merely an opsimathic dilettante I should not presume to disagree with him—but I do.

To commence with, one cannot generalize about Art, for few people agree upon what constitutes an art. The Arts are, strictly speaking, divided into three categories. There are the Liberal Arts, comprising scholarship in education—hence Master of Arts; there are the technical Arts, consisting chiefly of interpretative skill, such as dancing and acting; then there are the Fine Arts, which are, to my way of thinking, the only true Arts. There are five of these, and

they are at once classical, creative and soul-inspired—to wit, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, and poetry. Modernity now insists upon calling all sorts of enterprises artistic, with the ridiculous and vandalic result that we hear of the ‘art of the film’, ‘the art of cocktail-shaking’ and ‘the art of making love’. This is, of course, a gross and vulgar abuse of the word and is due to ignorance and colloquial slackness. There are plenty of terms such as craft, artifice, knack, &c., which could be substituted with more fitness.

But when Mill says, ‘Art proposes to itself an end’, I am not sure that I have understood him correctly. By ‘an end’ he may mean the uncompromising urge some people feel to consummate their creative instinct in whatever direction their bent may lie. If so, I do follow him. This explanation is cleverly exemplified by the painter Strickland in Somerset Maugham’s *Moon and Sixpence*. The man had left his wife and children penniless in London in order to indulge his craving in the freedom of the Quartier Latin. When his wife’s friend had sought him out and expressed disbelief in his ability to succeed as an artist, Strickland replied:

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'I tell you I've got to paint. I can't help myself. When a man falls into the water it doesn't matter how he swims, well or badly: he's got to get out or else he'll drown.'

A feeling such as this, ruthless and passionate, must emanate from somewhere near the soul, although, like all artistic expression, it is plainly a manifestation of emotion. And I expect this was what Mill had in mind—an inner disturbance making for a virtuosity that few of us display.

The purpose of this chapter is not so much to interest you in the Arts as to give you the right perspective as to their importance. For there is no topic in the world about which more drivel is talked and written, no subject that lends itself to more affectation, none that is more burdened with pseudo-apostolic adherents. For goodness' sake avoid these errors.

To show you what I mean, I will tell you that the other day I was walking through Christie's. I stopped to admire an attractive-looking head of a child by Botticelli. At the same moment two middle-aged women came up and gazed at it through lorgnettes. Presently one turned to the other and, with a voice conspicuous for its artificiality, said, 'My dear, isn't it clever?'

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Now, I have no great knowledge of the Florentine school of painting, but I'm quite sure that the word 'clever' could in no circumstances be applied to the delicate work of this great artist. She had no doubt heard of Botticelli and thought it would be safe to gamble with the word 'clever' in order to impress her friend with her artistic sense.

Again, a few days ago I went to a cocktail party at the famous house of the wife of a famous author. This is a rare occurrence with me, as I do not drink. I ate two little sausages, but it was not these that made me want to vomit. The house was full of scented young men and masculine women. The former for the most part wore purple shirts, red ties, and long wavy hair; the latter, white shirts with stiff collars, black ties, and closely cropped straight hair. There were a few exceptions—two M.P.s, two or three normal women, and two lovely young things who were both chatting animatedly with the spineless but 'artistic' youths.

As I was cutting my way through the nauseating atmosphere towards the front door, my hostess ran after me and said, 'Oh, before you go you must see my new John.' For a moment I felt more foolish than ever, until I remem-

bered Augustus of that ilk. I followed her into an adjacent room and gave vent in my modest masculine way to suitable expressions of admiration. However, I felt they were all too inadequate as a young person behind me in trousers was saying, 'Oh, how perfectly adorable. Isn't that too, too divine?'

A knowledge of painting is not one of my points. I have wandered listlessly through Burlington House, the Wallace Collection, and the National Gallery; I have paced the echoing halls of the Louvre, the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries, and most of the other treasure houses of the world; but, perhaps through lack of time, interest, or some other essential, I have never acquired a real knowledge of this great art.

But if I am unversed in the Old Masters I am completely puzzled by the Modernists. I can admire with understanding the work of Van Gogh, Gauguin, Manet, and Cézanne, and find delight in the artistic conceptions of the near-moderns such as Dégas, Monet, and Renoir, but I am defeated, not to say annoyed, by the crazy confessions of people like Henri Matisse, Braque, and sometimes Picasso. These creators of the Futurist-Cubist school tell us they paint what they feel and not what they see. Was John

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Stuart Mill by any means their sponsor? 'Art proposes to itself an end and looks out for means to effect it.' Yes, this sentence conveys a definite implication to sensual expression. I wish I was certain what he meant.

In regard to music, I'm afraid you're going to be a disappointment to me. I should have dearly loved you to have been musical, but so far you cannot even sing in tune. This is curious, because you are remarkably fond of the piano and the gramophone when it plays dance music. Also you display an uncanny sense of rhythm. I suppose this is better than a partiality for Gilbert and Sullivan. At your age I was singing seconds to my brother Alan's firsts.

However, it may come. If it does I am going to give you the chance to learn the piano. I cannot tell you what a wonderful accomplishment this is. I started when I was six and through laziness and lack of application I gave it up at twelve. Realizing that I was musically inclined, my parents tried me alternately with the violin, the flute, and finally, and being at school in Scotland, the bagpipes! But no, I couldn't be bothered. Ten years later I would gladly have given years of my life to have been able to play the piano.

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At the age of nineteen I lived in Germany for a year. During that period I attended the Opera regularly twice a week. This taught me to appreciate good music, and since then it has occupied a third of my life—for I feel, like Plato, that music is the eternal form of all that is good, just and beautiful; things which I may have sometimes missed in their more practical forms. I shall try and give you the same chances.

Haydn and other eighteenth-century composers I find dull, even Mozart—except in Opera; but the works of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Dvořák, Tchaikowski, Chopin, right up to Debussy, Sibelius, Paderewski, and Rachmaninoff, in one form or another, send me into ecstasies. Particularly the last named, certainly one of the world's greatest composers. But he once wrote a Prelude in C sharp minor and, as in the case of Elgar and 'Salut d'Amour', will never live it down. Moscovski is another who has written three or four very fine pieces, but, for some reason I have never been able to discover, is hopelessly neglected. Of the operatic composers I find Wagner the most inspiring. This is possibly because I am an emotionalist where music is concerned; and for this reason, should be derided by the highbrows. The



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Italian school is also delightful for other reasons. Donizetti, Rossini, Verdi, and Puccini being my favourites.

In the world of books you show more promise. You are at present crazy about history and other subjects of a semi-educational nature. This pleases me enormously because, as I have already said, I would like you above everything to be a writer. But you mustn't dabble in it as I have. You must read your Dickens and your Scott while you are still young. Your poetical recitations are already masterly, so read Wordsworth, Browning, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Calverley, Swinburne, and Tennyson. With a knowledge of the Latin and Greek classics which you will acquire at school, and an appreciation of the English poets, you will be handsomely equipped for any creative profession you care to tackle, even if it is only serviceable as a background.

You will probably also pass through the phase of devouring the cheap novelists. This will serve its purpose too, but you must not waste too much time with stuff like that. Personally, I can find no time for novel-reading even if I wanted to. I am far too occupied with books on subjects that matter and others that I am

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forced to read for business reasons. From where I am sitting now I can see my bookshelf. It is full of informative material such as *A New Theory of the Universe*, *The Stormy Life of Mirabeau*, *Wagner in Exile*, *Dictatorship on its Trial*, *The Plays of Galsworthy*, *A Man for England*, *An Analysis of Life*, *Machiavelli*, *Great Sea Mysteries*, *The Troubadours*, *The Blot on Parliament*, *Brother and Sister*, *The Painted Veil*—yes, I always read Maugham. I also have a partiality for German and Scandinavian authors. Their work is rather more depressing, but remarkably realistic and sincere. It makes one think. Read Wedekind, Heinrich, and Thomas Mann, the Franks, Arnold Zweig, Feuchtwanger, Strindberg, Lagerlöf, and Tolstoy. Your time will not be wasted.

I have already touched on films in another chapter. Many people talk about the art of the film, but I am not one of them. A product that is evolved through a process of optical, chemical, mechanical, and other contrivances can have no foundation in Art with a capital A. It is too bound up with scientific invention. Films of outstanding merit are at best the work of master craftsmen.

On this subject my friend John Stuart Mill said, 'Science takes cognizance of a phenomenon

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and tries to ascertain its law.' Here it is plain what he meant. The development of the cinema is a fine example. It was and is a phenomenon, and we have yet to discover the limits of its law. The fact that its scientific aspect is wedded to the world of ancient Arts has only served to bastardize the latter, not to befriend it. We have as yet no definite conception of its purpose. There is no indication that it has yet become immortal. What is its final shape and form to be?

However, we sometimes come across a film which, on account of its human values, intense natural sincerity, and delicate treatment, inspires one anew with hope for its future. This happens, perhaps, once a year; otherwise one must regard film-making solely as a commercial proposition, and, in its present phase of development, not a very noble one.

If it appeals to you, try it by all means and I will help you. It is possible that if you are interested in the drama and science you will, like myself, find it absorbing. But you cannot hope to make a good director unless you are yourself a writer, a natural actor, and possess, with this knowledge, a keen appreciation of the camera and what it can do in relation to the cutting-

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room. Not more than three directors in England know how to use a camera dramatically, and in Hollywood also such men are scarce.

It therefore boils down to this—that if you want to go into business as a manufacturer, and have a bent for the theatre, then you might do a lot worse than manufacturing films, for it can be profitable. Remember, however, that you must first be able to write your own script and cut your own picture, for no director is worthy of the name if he cannot do those things. If you can sketch your own sets and arrange your own music you will be even more successful.

The mere fact that my attempt to write about the film as an art has developed unwittingly into a discussion of its merits as a business, should be enough proof of my contention that film-making as we know it today is first and last commercial.

## XII

### *On War and Peace*

There will undoubtedly come a time in your life when you will be asked or expected to fight for your King and Country. The subject of War and Peace has been so hotly debated ever since the end of the Great War in 1918 that I feel this book would not be complete without giving you my views on the question.

In common with most normal persons, I abhor and detest the business of killing people. There is a considerable school of thought, however, which is exemplified in the writings and actions of people like Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Mussolini, and Treitschke, which considers that war has a vitalizing influence on the peoples engaged therein. There may have been something in this contention up till the end of the last century, but, examining the hypothesis in

the light of present-day developments, what do we find in weighing the pros and cons?

Briefly this: that during the last war over seven million people were killed and more than ten million were wounded—many maimed for life. That many thousands of millions of pounds were blown into the air, which is synonymous with pouring them down the drain. That since the War—for the last fifteen years—the whole world has been upside down; the whole framework of progressive civilization shaken into a twisted mass. Hand in hand with the ghoulish war profiteer came the *nouveau pauvre*, odd effigies in their topsyturvydom. A million erstwhile belligerent people have since committed suicide. Business has been chaotic; Society has been wanton; morality has been at a discount; the masses have been starving; and diplomacy has been more hypocritical than ever before. As I write, things are in a worse condition than at any period of the aftermath and, after only fifteen years, there are loud rumblings, nay, definite preparations for another war.

And this is the price of a 'vitalizing influence'. Rather should I say this *was* the price of the last application, for like everything else the price fluctuates with the law of supply and de-

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mand and with the invention of labour-slaying devices. We now have finer brands of lethal gases, larger and faster aeroplanes that will fly swiftly to our enemies' countries and sprinkle each other's women and little children with a baptism of excruciating agony. I need not dwell on this aspect because it is accepted by all knowledgeable people. And yet, as I say, we are nearer another clash of arms today than at any time since Europe went wild with thankfulness on Armistice Day in November 1918.

Now, in order to fathom this apparent urge to slaughter, we must attempt to discover the impelling motive. Many people, far more fitted than I, have tackled the problem, but inasmuch as I am your father I intend to tell you what I think.

When I contemplate war I do not, like the warrior Beverley Nichols, feel any desire to rush into a garden and crush elm leaves in my hands. This may be because I have experienced war and he hasn't. On the other hand, it may be for quite another reason. No, in my opinion there are two motivating influences—the human and the economic. Let us first deal with the human factor.

Most of us are imbued with certain basic emotions. Some are subjective, others objec-

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tive; some are petty, others important. The ones that are concerned with this thesis are patriotism, jealousy, pride, rivalry, and conquest. These are elementary constituents of the human character, and as such are beyond our control. Not only that, for, if we think again, we will realize that they are mostly manifest throughout the entire animal kingdom. Whereas, then, it may be possible to tranquillize periodically these ebullient characteristics, it is obviously quite impossible to eradicate them; in fact, if we were to dispense with them all, the resultant peace would not be worth having. We must, therefore, conclude that however much we might manage to stifle these passions they would at best be dormant and might be fired at any moment by a less abstract incitement. A dangerous path indeed for progress to tread, especially when we consider it internationally and realize the mental and physical organizations peculiar to the various nations, the attributes which tend to influence their thoughts and actions.

So much for the human factor—or shall we call it frailty?—which has been prominent in its various phases in every war that has ever been fought.

But of recent years another element has raised



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its head. This is the economic monster, or in other words, the struggle to live—the less abstract incitement mentioned above. Goaded the human factor to rebellion, it strides across the world like some Colossus, seemingly regardless of progress or civilization. In prehistoric times the economic factor was the dominating cause for strife, then for an æon it gave way to the human one. Now, in the twentieth century, the economic issue has again become the predominating agent.

If, therefore, we try to discern the causes of the World War, what will we find? A succession of prefatorial crises nearly all concerned with economic necessity suitably fanned by the most subversive of human passions.

First came the Boer War of 1899–1902, with its inspiring motives of conquest, greed, and pride. Next the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, with its strong psychological effect on Europe; motive economic, with the same human provocations. Then, in 1905, the German Emperor made a speech at Tangier, challenging French interests in Morocco, which nearly precipitated a premature European conflict. In 1908–9 Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, which again stirred the European dove-

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cots. And then the Agadir incident of 1911; once more were we brought to the brink of war. The same motives applied—the tussle between Germany and France for an economic outlet in Morocco. Finally, the Balkan War of 1912-13, when King Nicholas of Montenegro is said to have declared war on Turkey so that he could 'bear' the Vienna stock market.

By 1914 France had almost succeeded in putting an Entente ring round Germany extending from England at one extremity, through the Balkans, to Russia on the other side. By way of completing this we made a Baltic naval pact with Russia which effectually surrounded Germany with forces which, if not actually declared hostile, constituted an immense threat to her existence and a definite restriction on any ideas she may have had for expansion. Her population, imbued with a war fever engendered by the Kaiser's continued sabre-rattling, had been increasing by leaps and bounds. The crescendo of nervous tension created during the preceding fifteen years was ready to burst into hysteria on the smallest provocation. It came at Serajevo. It lasted four and a quarter years and left the world as I have outlined in the beginning of this chapter.

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Now, I have sketched this out so that we can compare the fifteen years that preceded the Great War with the fifteen years that have elapsed since the Armistice.

The Treaty of Versailles, as you will learn, with its little brother the Treaty of Trianon, imposed various conditions on Germany and her defeated Allies. They were drawn up for the most part by President Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau, all of whom were untravelled men and who proceeded to carve up the world, and particularly Europe, without regard to geography, history, economics, or racial sentiment. A couple of schoolboys with a map on the wall could have done as well. With a wave of the Statesmen's wand they expatriated millions of people. Germans were turned into Poles, Czechs, and French; Austrians into Czechs, Italians, and Jugo-Slavs; Hungarians into Roumanians, Czechs, and Jugo-Slavs; Montenegrins into Jugo-Slavs; Turks into Greeks—and so on. It must have been great fun drawing pretty lines with coloured pencils on the map of Europe. Germany was deprived of twenty per cent of her territory and all her Colonies. Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria, being smaller countries, although less responsible,

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for the War, were treated in even worse fashion by these bullies of Versailles.

If this picture of crass ineptitude requires framing, we need only remember that since the War the population of Germany has been increasing at the rate of 800,000 a year. To fully appreciate what these mappists did by way of inflaming those two monsters—Human Frailty and Economic Necessity—we must imagine that England had been told by America, France, and Germany that in future Norfolk and Suffolk would belong to and be populated by Poles, Scotland by Serbs, and Wales by the French. A happy country we should be, and how peacefully we should live! Yet that is the position obtaining in Germany and Central Europe today. If there could be a greater incentive to future wars I should like to hear of it.

As I have referred to Germany in another chapter, I need not prolong the subject here. But I have said enough to make it obvious to anyone outside a mental home that we cannot hope for any peace and happiness until these post-war treaties are revised with an eye to equity and common sense. It is admittedly a very difficult thing to take back something already given, and I am not sufficiently in the

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councils of Europe, nor am I clever enough, to suggest a way out. It seems to me, however, that some *quid pro quo* could be found by way of compensating these upstart peoples when the reorganization of Europe takes place, as take place it must.

Europe, however, is not the only problem. The Far East is bristling with volcanic potentialities owing to the presence of the economic monster. In the Japanese Empire there are 321 people to the square mile. Asiatic Russia, her nearest neighbour, has but 4 people to the square mile. The population of Japan is increasing at the rate of nearly a million a year. The result is obvious and inevitable. She must either bust or perish. She chose recently to do the former, and marched recklessly into a part of China which is not overcrowded. This is but a beginning. We cannot blame her: we can only look with interest at the possibility that next time it may be Russia or perhaps Australia, where there are under 2 people to the square mile.

As we are discussing the prospects of peace, I suppose I should be doing the subject an injustice if I did not refer to the League of Nations. This fine idea was propounded by President Wilson of America and found immediate sup-

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port from the countries of Europe who were then gasping for breath. I say *fine* idea because it was—in its amoebic inception. Its main intention was to create a new orientation in diplomacy. Instead of various nations making secret arrangements for defence and attack between themselves, as they were wont to do before the War, it was suggested that this League should be formed, representative of every country in the world, which would meet periodically in plenary session to discuss the private affairs of the various members in public conclave. Further, that this hybrid bureaucracy should bring to bear concerted military action against any country that was so sinful as to challenge its authority.

The evangelical President—I call him an evangelist because Chambers's *Twentieth Century Dictionary* will have it that an evangelist is 'one authorized to preach, but without a fixed charge'—this evangelical President, having been acclaimed with Messiah-like adulation by Europe, then proceeded to create the precedent, since followed by nearly every American emissary, of returning to his native country to meet with repudiation by his own people.

But the American people were entirely right;

it was the President who erred in allowing Europe to think that he spoke with his country's backing. They were right because, from the first, the League commenced degenerating into a hotbed of farraginous humbug which has increased in intensity as the years have passed. Excellent as the proposal was in embryo, it has since blossomed into an assemblage redolent of the type of political intrigue and National avarice which its initiators were so anxious to avoid. And this because of the unsound premises on which it was founded—the inequitable and uneconomic partition of Europe.

Let me give you another example. If you owned a four-storied house and half a dozen of your worst enemies arrived one day and said you had been making a nuisance of yourself to the neighbourhood, and for that reason Mr. Polski and his family from Poland were going to occupy the top floor in future, and Mr. Slavski and his family were going to occupy the third floor, and Mr. François and his family the second, and that in future you were to be satisfied with the first floor and basement only; however much to blame you were, you would not feel very peaceful about it, would you?—particularly if your wife were presenting you with

a new baby every year. That, however, is the position in Europe today.

In 1922 I was in Morocco. This portion of North Africa was handed over to French enterprise at the beginning of this century through a secret arrangement with the British, in return for a free hand in Egypt. It was the outcome of an Anglo-French incident at Fashoda in 1898. I will not go into the details except to say that French 'enterprise' consisted of a policy of pacification by depopulation. Now that Morocco has been successfully wrested from the Moorish occupants, it is considered a prosperous if not a happy community. By a treaty made in 1903 a coastal strip of the country called the Riff was apportioned to Spain. However, the Spanish, not being renowned for their military prowess, were unable, with the whole of their army, to conquer the Riffis whose forces consisted of some fifteen thousand ill-equipped men. For a matter of years the invaders were attempting to seize this land which had been allotted to them by people who did not own it. Abd-el-Krim, the Riffi leader, put up a remarkable fight in the defence of territory which had belonged to his people by every known law for two thousand years.

So impressed was I with his cause that I got



into touch with him and had the satisfaction of acting as his agent for a short period in England. I have it on the authority of the British Legation at Tangier that Abd-el-Krim endeavoured on more than one occasion to present his case to the League of Nations through the Legation, but that our officials had lent a deaf ear to his entreaties 'for fear of offending a friendly nation'. This first-hand incident will explain to you the type of diplomacy fostered by the notorious League of Nations whose authority has been flouted successfully on every occasion in which a powerful member has wished to prosecute his own interests. It is perhaps useless to discuss it further, as it will most certainly not be in existence by the time you are grown up. On the other hand, its promoters have built a colossal edifice at Geneva in which to house the hypocrites. If for no other purpose, it will serve as a monument to bureaucracy's most tragic insincerity.

But if the League is a failure in its present form, how are we to reconstruct it so that it can be made to serve the commendable purpose for which it was inaugurated? To my humble way of thinking there is but one possible course. Bearing in mind the truism that it is the poli-

ticians and not the people who cause wars, I suggest that we shall get no nearer peace until the people of the nations whose Governments are squabbling can be consulted first hand on the issue of war or peace when that contingency arises; until the munition factories, if exist they must, are State owned, so that the insidious power of vested interests and private profit are bereft of their influence.

And, whereas Socialism is the only true form of democratic Government, the only one that is truly representative of the feelings of the vast majority of sentient masses, we British Socialists must push on towards closer affiliation with the Movements in France, Germany, and Italy. The only period since the War that we have made any progress towards Peace was when Ramsay Macdonald was Socialist Prime Minister of England and M. Herriot was Socialist Premier of France. Even the Conservative Press admitted that Macdonald's regime as Premier and Foreign Minister in 1924 had been notably successful. Since then he has, unfortunately, forsaken his Party and renounced his former principles.

You see, the Socialistic mind is something quite fresh in mentality and outlook, viewing the world and its outworn traditions through

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lenses that are primarily altruistic and humane. It is not anything like so acquisitive as the Capitalistic mind. Jealousy, rivalry, and the other destructive emotions which I have already mentioned as being provocative of war-mindedness, are mellowed by a genuine feeling of brotherhood. The governing classes, on the other hand, are still steeped in the pre-war conviction that Might is the most righteous Right. Human nature is partly rotten and partly good, so let us appeal to the good in man for a change. I think it may be found to predominate.

And now about you, if war comes in your time, which assuredly it will. What are you going to do? I feel it may be useless my advising you, because you may find that something in you that you will not trouble or seek to analyse will send you immediately into the service of your country. For this I shall not blame you; it will be the 'my country right or wrong' feeling which is inherent in most of us. Perhaps, though, I might tell you how I feel about it whilst the experience of the last war is yet fresh in my memory.

Just this: if I were asked to fight another war on foreign soil, nothing on God's earth would make me do it, because, whatever the politicians

said to the contrary, it would be an offensive war. On the other hand, if England herself or her Empire were attacked, I would fight to the last breath in my body to defend her. England gave me birth, and I would fight in response to the same impulse that would force me to defend my mother. I would fight to defend you, your mother, everything I held dear in life; aye, and so would every man worthy of the name.

To think that you are now my conception of eternity; that every day in your little life is planned so carefully so that you may some day find the beauty and the greatness that I have missed; that you may in time mate with some pure and loving woman and in your turn have children in whom you will take a pride.

To think of that, and then of the possibility that when you are eighteen or nineteen, on the threshold of that life for which you have been so anxiously prepared, you may be torn from us who have held you in such esteem, and flung—lithe, healthy body that you have—into an abattoir of mangled corpses; that simultaneously with your final breath the cash-register of the munition-maker will ring with the receipt of another profitable pound. Oh God, can no one help us?

tary vote. But they have succeeded also in obtaining a great deal more. Today the emancipation of woman, if slow in attainment, is proceeding unchecked.

Nowadays we are favoured with the presence of women in the ranks of most of the professions previously reserved for men. But if, for instance, their appearances in Court are a trifle spasmodic and infrequent, it must not be thought that this is the fault of woman, but rather of litigants who seem strangely unable to appreciate the superiority of woman's well-known capacity for logical reasoning. In the realms of medical science, the doctors, always a courteous people, have abandoned their exclusive attitude and have admitted the fair sex to their faculty on an equal footing. I believe there are some hundreds of women doctors on the register. The fact that I have never met anyone who has sought the advice of a woman doctor when in distress proves nothing, for, being only a man, I am not inquisitive.

In the world of sport her prowess must be acclaimed. At tennis and at golf she has made herself world famous. No one will deny her that, and I for one am not going to be so unchivalrous as to suggest that her success might

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be due to the fact that she does not have to compete on an equal footing with man. For instance, I don't think Betty Nuttall has ever been matched with Bunny Austin, young though he may be, nor Diana Fishwick with Abe Mitchell, old though he may be. After all, this is sport, and—well, let us proceed.

We do know that women can drive cars on an equal footing with men. I have heard some people say they are a public danger, but for my part I think they drive very sweetly. However that may be, it would not be considered fair to match even the most famous woman driver against, shall we say, Sir Malcolm Campbell or Kaye Don. But why not? It cannot be for any reason of physical inferiority, because we are told by the feminists that that is a theory reminiscent of the Dark Ages. What is her handicap?

And what does the future hold in store for us? How far may we expect woman to make her mark in the pages of future historical records? Let us refer back and try to find some sort of parallel. We may even discover that the twentieth century is not the first to proclaim woman's freedom. For if we dive into the details of Hellenic history we may be surprised to find that even in those far-off days the position

of woman was not inferior to that of man. She was admitted into all the arts and sciences, she had the disposition of her own property. And yet only one name comes readily to my mind as having lived through the ages. She was a poetess called Sappho. Byron tells us that she loved and sang. But rumour has it that she was a woman of abnormal inclinations, and I can well believe it, for her species persists today, only it doesn't often sing.

In the Middle Ages the men were more eager to be proficient with the sword than with the pen. It therefore came about that the instruction of women in the cultural arts and sciences was far superior. There were even doctors and, if we are to believe Shakespeare, women lawyers too, but they did nothing of any note to advance culture.

Although flappers of all nations have been strumming pianos since they were invented, I know of no piece of classical importance by a female composer. Again, look through the galleries of Europe and you will find no painting of any great merit with a woman's signature beneath it, unless we except Rosa Bonheur—and she, being no doubt a disciple of Sappho, dressed as a man and shaved her chin.

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If, then, we can thus look down the ages and perceive a field so barren of achievement in the cultural sphere, which is in no way governed by physical attributes, how much less need we presume that woman will be any more successful now that she is attempting to invade every province previously proscribed by man.

If we wish for an example of feminism on trial I suppose we should look at America. Many decades ago, during the early days of settling the country, certain stringent laws were introduced, and quite rightly so, to protect women who were in contact with what might be called primitive man. The social complexion of the nation has now completely changed, but these laws have remained. With the result that we are treated to a picture of feminism gone wild. Women in their newly acquired 'freedom' display no sense of balance or proportion. There is a tragic lack of decorum. The country's social progress is largely in subjection to a number of women's clubs whose moral codes have but little bearing on equity and common sense. Man is just a money-making chattel in the home, with the result that out of it he treats his women as subjects of derision. But even with this vast degree of 'emancipation' woman



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has not succeeded in wresting the fruits of serious responsibility from 'the enemy'. England has had her Queens through heredity, but the American people when called upon to elect their President have always chosen a man. The truth is that women do not trust women. In this fact alone is there salvation for the future.

You will gather from the foregoing mordacious discursion that I am a rabid anti-feminist. I do not believe that intelligence and feminism can co-exist. But I am in no way a misogynist. I believe that the procreation of the human species is the central fact of life, and that the Creator himself did not intend that this should be interfered with by any whimsical fanaticism on the part of mankind. Both man and woman are sexual beings and as such have a duty to each other of paramount importance. Woman is supreme in her particular sphere and man in his. But for woman to say she is supreme in hers and equal in his, is just as patently unadulterated nonsense as to reverse the argument. Of the two, woman's obligation to humanity is by far the more beautiful, and every normal woman knows it. That is why we find that the agitators of so-called feminist movements are for the most part either unmarried, unmarriage-

able, or sexual intermediates incapable of performing the function for which nature has endowed them, and as such are not entitled to represent the bulk of their charming sex.

Charming—yes, and it is only by the retention of this exquisite quality that she will be able to hold her own. It is already apparent that women who attempt to invade man's sphere lose that feminine attraction which has been the foundation of animal existence since the world began. Thus is her action subversive of progress and provocative of sex antagonism. It is, moreover, doomed to failure by virtue of the physical, mental and biological reasons which are so well known to students of sexual psychology. So much for woman's role in public life.

Now let us try and consider feminality or, in other words, her nature. You will notice that I say 'try', because the first and surest premise to a discussion on this subject is the age-old conviction that woman's nature is incomprehensible. If in my remarks I should appear at times ungenerous, do not think that I am necessarily biased. I am dealing now with woman. I am not out to laud man's nature at her expense. Both sexes have their faults, and if I chose I could make out an unpleasant indict-

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ment against the male. I want you therefore to bear in mind, whatever else I say, that woman's influence on man can and should be the most beneficent thing in his life.

Those who sit in judgement on woman are usually at fault. For many centuries man has been the warrior, the dominating sex. The ages have accordingly defined certain laws of behaviour which he is supposed to observe. Various civilizations have supplemented them, until now we can readily distinguish a gentleman from a cad. Erroneously and quite unfairly, people are inclined to judge woman by the same standards, and when they discover that they are not conforming to the rules set up by man, nor, in fact, to any rules, they give vent to platitudes anent the impossibility of woman. From their point of view she *is* impossible; one never knows what she will do or think next. She lacks stability, integrity and sometimes dignity.

The impelling motive, the deciding factor, in every normal woman is her heart. When it is replete with erotic embolisms it is as indispensable as when it is empty and yearning for its complement. The result is that the only law she really knows is the law of the

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heart. Under its influence she is capable of acts of limitless self-sacrifice and, on the other hand, undreamed-of villainy and deceit.

But when we take into consideration the biological aspect, her erratic conduct is further mitigated. Her womb and ovaries, in fact her whole generative system, is a most sensitive piece of mechanism which provokes a continuous reaction, through the nerve centres, on the brain. Its periodical phases are mostly responsible for her caprice. The average normal woman (and I am only dealing with the average normal woman) must therefore be treated with the greatest indulgence. Man's attitude in this respect is facilitated by his inherent desire to protect, cherish and indulge her—a fine example of God's wisdom.

In this connexion I shall not forget a certain incident—you must have been about three. We were driving in a taxi with your mother when she commenced to cry at something you imagined I had said. You flung your little arms around her neck to comfort her and then, turning in my direction, you stared at me with loathing in your eyes. In the next moment you flew across the taxi and kicked me as hard as you were able on the leg. My first reaction was one

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of intense grief to think that my son should feel like that about me, but it was almost immediately replaced by a gladness to think that you were built aright. I would not have had you feel otherwise.

You will notice that a man is frequently referred to as a cad—a woman never. A woman can do the most outrageously dishonourable thing, and if you ask her why she did it she will just laugh and say, 'I dunno,' and those futile words somehow call for condonation and forgiveness—and sometimes even sympathy!

There is a popular belief that woman is unable to reason logically and that she has but little sense of fair play. Both these contentions are true. When you are first brought face to face with them they will amaze you, but do not let them exasperate you. Women don't mean half they say, so you must never take them too seriously. Remain calm and tolerant at all times in their presence. Be warned that they are sometimes trying to provoke you to retaliation, as there is nothing they like better than a 'scene'. On the other hand, there are some women who cannot bear silent indifference, so I advise you to walk away and leave the room if you do not wish to become embroiled. This

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hysterical type of woman, who is all too common, usually combines a good sense of drama, and the more public the scene the more it will appeal to her. She will assault a man or in other ways create a scene in a bus, in a street, or in a public restaurant, quite regardless of the consequences. Her motive is nearly always jealousy—a terrible emotion when not under control.

But, whatever you do, never hit a woman. To start with it is dangerous, as they are very fragile creatures. Secondly, many of them like it from a masochistic point of view (this type of woman will delight in running round and showing her friends the bruises made by 'that brute of a man'). Thirdly, under certain circumstances it may be cowardly; and lastly—in no event will it avail you anything.

Remember always that a woman is dreadfully affected by the opinions of others, particularly of other women, so try to avoid offending her pride.

So far I have dealt chiefly with her bad points, now let me tell you of her good ones. To commence with (I am still talking of the average normal woman), she is astonishingly loyal. If necessary to protect a friend she will

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maintain that black is white and will subject herself to untold abuse and discomfort. She is also very generous and unselfish, a trait which plays into the hands of that despicable person—the man who is prepared to live on a woman. This is a vile abuse both of his and her position, and to my mind the man who does this, whether in marriage or otherwise, forfeits his place in society. As a companion in trouble she can be devoted and longsuffering, and, in her particular capacity, hardworking. I think also that woman's desire to be physically faithful is greater than man's, but whether she succeeds or not in this desire is problematical owing to the fact that man is the dominating sexual factor and is therefore more likely to get his way.

This brings me to the more intimate subject of love and the intersexual relationship. We are told that love is a beautiful thing, and I subscribe wholeheartedly to that belief because I have been in love, desperately in love, more than once. But love is an emotion that affects each of us in a different manner. It is true there is a common characteristic that makes us all yearn for the other's company, but if we stopped to, or were sufficiently clear-headed to analyse our feelings, how many of us would

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realize that we were merely infatuated or consumed with a passion that would prove but transient? Love, unharnessed, is such a destructive influence; it is difficult to call it beautiful in retrospect. It is perhaps stirring; it is mentally devastating, it is compromising, ruinous, provoking hatred and jealousy, weakening, heartbreaking, and withal hopelessly selfish. The truth is that the first phase of love is so completely at the mercy of sex that it cannot for that reason consummate its true mission amongst us.

In *Much Ado about Nothing* Shakespeare says, 'Friendship is constant in all other things, save in the office and affairs of Love,' so that it would seem that, even in those days, love between man and woman was beset with the disintegrating influences I have just mentioned.

Understand me, Theo, I am not being cynical about this. I know the great beauty to be found in this queer emotion; what I am doing is to try and show you how best to discover it, to analyse my experience so that I can give you the benefit of it.

Although the state of being 'in love' is a most enthralling and blinding thing, I think perhaps one does not discover its greatest sweetness until



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it has evolved into what we know as deep friendship, a condition in which companionship and the flesh are equally blended. That is very, very difficult to arrange and can only be achieved by two people who are well balanced and unselfish. Hence the growing lists in the Divorce Court—people who are temperamentally unsuited or people who have not exercised enough discretion, patience, forgiveness and give-and-take.

Yet I am not speaking necessarily of marriage, because I can see but little sanctity in being coerced, tied and held in bondage by the Church or the Law. I can see nothing sacred in man-made laws for spiritual divination. Moreover, when two people sign the marriage register they are putting their signature to a contract whilst they are *non compos mentis*. A person 'in love' is in a state of erotic intoxication and therefore incapable of rational decision. Experience has long since proved the inadequacy of matrimonial convention. Human nature has called its bluff. A union which is without benefit of clergy is often just as pure a thing and, from a practical viewpoint, is more likely to be successful, because the parties are constrained to be more tolerant and understand-

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ing, having in mind the fact that at any moment one or the other may decide to say good-bye. Also, the moral obligation is stronger. A decent man cannot easily leave a woman whom he has openly compromised, especially if she is still in love with him.

You see, women have very little self-reverence. They value their chastity only to the extent that it is valued by the man they love. So that if they find they have lost their lover they will often throw virtue to the winds and live loosely and inconsequently. It is difficult for a man with any feeling, who has been fond of a woman, to view such behaviour with indifference. That is where woman has a strong hold over us. She knows it and often uses it unscrupulously, and a woman in love can be the most unscrupulous thing imaginable.

However, although I think marriage *qua* marriage is a faulty condition, I do not think that it is a convention we can ignore in the present state of social development. There is an inherent desire in women to be wives, irrespective of the question of affection. They have an even stronger urge to be mothers, and if for no other reason the law in some form is necessary to protect women from cads and children

from callous fathers. The fact that it sometimes operates unfairly and is frequently abused is the fault of its anachronistic provisions and not of its authority.

These anomalies show themselves in various ways. For instance, a man is not supposed to divorce his wife even if she is the guilty party. Why? Because it isn't considered the decent thing to do. No; he is forced by social convention to find some sordid woman and to spend the night with her at some equally sordid hotel. That is decent. On the other hand, if he takes this gentlemanly course he is debarred from taking part in public life. Only if he is cad enough to divorce his erring wife can he be considered a suitable candidate for Parliament or for any other public office. This position is, of course, untenable and is bound to be smoothed out in the near future by that encroaching 'freedom'. The demand for more rational laws, which is now fairly general throughout the world, will undoubtedly have its influence on matters of this sort.

It is useless for me to try and advise you on the question of selecting a wife, first because it is a topic on which it is unlikely you will listen to me, and further because in any case it would

be an impertinence on my part. You will be certain that you know your own mind when that time arrives, and you will possibly be right. I would only venture three things. First, be sure that she is healthy. An invalid wife would be a tremendous handicap to you. She would cost you a great deal of money; she would need a great deal of attention which you should be giving to other things, and if she bred at all she would bear you unhealthy children. Secondly, it does not matter whom you marry so long as you are proud of her *and likely to stay proud of her*. Thirdly, make certain she is a woman of peaceful temperament. There is nothing so upsetting and injurious to health as a woman who is continually nagging, whining, touchy and hysterical. Men have been done to death by women of this type. They are a millstone round one's neck, and if you should find yourself in this position I should advise you to seek relief in the Divorce Court without delay and try again.

I think also that many wives are too concerned with trying to make their husbands what they are not and never can be. This is most irritating. They marry them for better or for worse. I am not inferring that tactful wives cannot influence beneficially their husbands'

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minds, but it would be only the weaker men who would allow their characters to be fundamentally tampered with. For your part you must endeavour always to be chivalrous and kind, and above all never make your wife look or feel foolish in front of others.

On the question of marital fidelity I can only say this: that providing your wife is normal and healthy you should not want to be unfaithful to her. If your time is fully occupied with things that matter you will have no time or inclination to go astray. But you are attractive and temptation will undoubtedly come your way. If this happens and you do fall, take care that your wife does not hear of it. If she loves you it will hurt her, and that you must not do. Remember that she may be looking up to you for an example and that if her faith in you is destroyed or shaken she may think that fidelity and chastity do not so much matter after all. Understand me when I tell you that a woman's virtue is the most attractive thing about her—more attractive than the having of her body. This may seem a little paradoxical, but I hope you discern my meaning.

And now a word about what is known as

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sexual intercourse. It is probable that when you are a young man, perhaps while you are yet a boy, you will hear a lot of loose talk and filthy jokes surrounding fornication. On this account you will, more than likely, be influenced into thinking that women are there to provide men with cheap sensations and vice versa. In addition to this the sense of adventure, which is in most of us, and your curiosity, will stimulate your desire to know woman more closely. This latter inclination is quite natural, and I, as your father, am not going to do anything so foolish as to beg you to abstain. On the contrary, the impulse must be satisfied.

I would plead with you, however, on certain points; and I ask you from the bottom of my heart to listen to me. Do not, whatever happens, yield to those crude vulgarians who would have you think that physical connexion with woman is a light and trivial thing: do not in any circumstances become promiscuous. By so doing you would not only be acting under a false impression, but would acquire a cheap and unattractive mind and would forfeit your moral right to any pure and decent woman who might later come your way. Men and women who do this are little better than dogs and bitches,

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people of small intellect who know nothing of the sexual act except its orgasmic climax. Choose your woman carefully. Be selective: be fastidious. Grow to love her if you can, or to be very fond of her. Stick to her. Be faithful to her and you will find, if you are a man of sensitive and æsthetic feelings, that the longer you are lovers the more will you both enjoy your intimacies. Naked contact between the bodies of two people who care deeply for each other should be a thing of superb loveliness. There can be nothing degrading or disgusting between a man and a woman who think rightly, however advanced their desires. People who say that sexual intercourse is overrated are insensate and selfish blunderers and display a crass ignorance.

Another thing: do not sleep with a woman whom you would not care to be seen with in public. This precaution will guarantee a certain respect for her which *she* will appreciate as well as you. It will tend to keep the thing on a higher plane. On no account go with a whore. It shows a complete lack of self-respect and is dangerous from the point of view of disease. I am not only speaking of professional whores; there are plenty of them in Society today—*young girls*, pathetic creatures, whose parents seem to

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have told them nothing. If by any chance you should contract a venereal complaint, go immediately to a first-class doctor and do exactly what he tells you. Any slackness or procrastination in this direction will produce dreadful effects in later life and may react on your children.

You do not need me to tell you not to have anything to do with a married woman whose husband is your friend. The temptation is quite likely to arise, because if a man is your friend you will be in his house, or in his company and that of his wife, more than if he were not. But however strongly you are drawn together, do not touch her. It is not only a rotten thing to do but will land you in endless trouble.

You will hear a great deal of nonsense talked about the seduction of virginal women. You will hear men indignantly deny that they have ever seduced a woman. This is for the most part sheer hypocrisy. Furthermore, there is no reason for such lies. Every attractive woman is seduced sooner or later, and they are, consciously or subconsciously, for ever on the look-out for the right man to do it. When eventually they meet him and proffer the gift of their virginity they are offended beyond measure if he does not



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accept it. It is only sinful when it is done callously from a vicious point of view. So that you should on no account besmirch a girl's sexual purity unless you are genuinely and deeply fond of her and unless you are prepared to assume the responsibility that attaches to it. In these circumstances it will not be a question of defilement, rather the reverse. Remember that she will be giving you something that she can only give once in her lifetime. That sounds and is an extremely significant thing for her, but there is little truth in the popular belief that for this reason her first man is likely to remain the big 'affair' of her life. It is usually later on that she meets the man to whom she also surrenders her soul. That, however, does not lessen the seducer's responsibility.

As regards preventatives, I know of none that is not an insult to the relationship. In the event of your getting a woman into trouble you must stick to her and see her through it. Abortion is still a criminal offence in this country, so I am not going to advise you to be a party to it. But as it is today practised by many first-class surgeons it would seem that, apart from the larger economic aspect which is obvious, there are other mitigating circumstances.

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I have told you to stick to a woman if you should get her into trouble. I mean it; I am quite convinced of the morality of my advice—but why? There are some who appear not to understand why the man should always be deemed responsible. They argue that the sexual act and the pleasure of it are things shared mutually. It might be argued that if a woman were a fit person to sit on a jury and try a man for his life it would be ridiculous to presume that she could not appreciate what she was doing in a sphere in which lay her natural function. But there it is—one of those cases in which women both have their cake and eat it—wherein they have the put and call of man.

But would we have it otherwise? I do not think so. For to lack that protective instinct, which asserts itself as soon as man is faced with harassed woman, is to lack the savour of existence. To lack heroism, nobility, chivalry—in fact, to lack manliness.

## XIV

### *On Worldly Conduct and Character*

The seeds of godlike power are in us still;  
Gods are we, bards, saints, heroes, if we will!  
—*Matthew Arnold.*

I am placing this chapter last in this book so that you can the more easily find it. I am going to try and give you an index of behaviour which I should like you to regard as a basis on which to model your daily life. I expect you will say that most of my remarks are obvious. That may be very largely true. The more pity, then, that people do not more often adhere to these obviousnesses when they are called upon to bring them into action. At the present moment you show a marked inclination to right thinking and kindly, sympathetic feeling. It is in order to perpetuate this that I am writing this chapter, in the hope that later on your duty may not become clouded by subversive and material considerations.

Before going any further, however, I must

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welcome you back to England. You returned last week suddenly and without any warning. Your mother says Australia did not suit you, and so she brought you back as quickly as she could. I can well believe her, for I have rarely seen such a pathetic little wreck. Your wee body is emaciated and your face has lost all its happiness and rosiness. I am told you got sunstroke on board the ship both going out and coming back. I can believe anything. You seemed to find difficulty in breathing too, so I took you at once to a children's specialist, who said you had asthma. He says you will soon pick up again and that he can cure your asthma by a course of treatment. What a business it will be getting you right. But you have already improved and are attending school again. You seemed very glad to see me once more, and I am tremendously glad to have you back. Now let us forget Sydney Harbour, the Galle Face, the Suez Canal, and sunstroke, and get back to this final and important chapter.

You know how anxious I am that you should be a success in life. But I am equally anxious that in the process you do not trample ruthlessly upon other people. I have been near enough to success myself to know that this is in no way

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necessary. You will see other people doing it, but do not be influenced into thinking that it is admissible. Success obtained by these methods is no success at all to a sensitive and decent-thinking person, because while you were receiving the plaudits of the world your inner self would never give you peace. And success without happiness is not worth having. Apart from this, hitch your waggon to an ideal of high resolve and pursue it with relentless determination.

Self-confidence is of paramount importance; at the same time I am inclined to think that a knowledge of your own limitations is equally necessary. Because if you know exactly of what you are capable you need have no qualms about your ultimate achievement. You need fear no criticism, however objectionable, if you are sure you know what you are doing. Do not let failure cast you down. Let it rather be an incentive to extra determination. Waste no time over it. Start again, remembering its lessons.

In your journey through life there will be times when you will have to make decisions of importance. When these occur, do not take the easiest course because it is the easiest. Be

fearless in everything; without courage you can achieve nothing.

The managing director of one of the largest film concerns in England once said to me deprecatingly, 'Do you know, Miles, what they say about you in my studio?'

'No,' I replied. 'What do they say?'

He looked me fiercely in the face and said, 'That you are a man of no compromise at all.'

'Good,' I smiled. But little did he appreciate the compliment he paid me. I have suffered for this attitude. I am considered 'difficult' and am not *persona grata* with people of small vision. At the same time I know this man has a high opinion of me; I have heard it indirectly from other people. He is entitled to do as he thinks fit, and I am gratified that my moral stock is unimpaired. I will not be dragooned into acting against my convictions, especially when my reputation is at stake. Don't be afraid of taking an independent course. People who follow like sheep in search of popularity are quite worthless. There can be no compromise between right and wrong either morally, artistically, politically, or in any other way.

Neither can there be any compromise be-

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tween honour and dishonour, honesty and crookedness, truth and falsehood. You will know instinctively how to discriminate. It is a great thing to be known as a man of honour. It lifts you right out of the rut of the commonplace because, to be perfectly frank, there are very few men who can be relied upon to do the honourable thing in all circumstances. This is a sweeping assertion and a terrible indictment of mankind. I would so willingly think otherwise, but I cannot. Four men out of five will take the dishonourable course when put to the test, if it is the easiest one. It is a case of moral cowardice and it can ride side by side with physical heroism: queer bedmates.

I hope you will remember this advice whenever you are in a hole: do not try to avoid your creditors. Go and face them, explaining your predicament: be frank and open and you will find them sympathetic. Never decamp leaving a mess behind you. If you want to leave the country, clear up your affairs before you go. If you cannot pay your debts, come to an arrangement with your creditors and see that you carry it out to the best of your ability. If you find later that it is not possible to keep to the arrangement, then write and tell them so, giving them

the reason why. If you do this they will assuredly give you more time.

The greatest compliment ever paid me was the outcome of such a situation. Many years ago I owed a tradesman a small sum of about three pounds. He pressed me for the money; but I could not then pay him. He asked me when I could promise to let him have it, and I gave him my word that he should be paid by the end of February. When that time arrived I was in Africa, but as luck would have it I remembered the man and sent him a cheque. He acknowledged it thus: 'Dear Sir, I am in receipt of your cheque for £3 as promised. There is still a small sum of five shillings outstanding, but it is worth that amount to meet a man whose word is his bond. Perhaps when your ship comes home you will send it to me.' I did. Wasn't it luck that I remembered the date?

In America and France and other countries they have their own conceptions of honesty. They are not ours. The Englishman has set himself rather a high standard. He enjoys an enviable reputation throughout the world on that account. See to it that you do not let your country down. But see to it also that when amongst your own people you do not let your-



self down. You will meet a great deal of crookedness, particularly in the world of competitive business. The scramble after money is quite ruthless. Fortunes made by these people are tainted. Do not attempt to compete with them or you will become contaminated. It may be your success will be slower of attainment, but it will at least be real. It is a tremendous asset in life to bear a reputation for being honest. A man who is corruptible is low and ignoble.

The mention of bribery reminds me of an incident which affected me very much at the time and which will show you how human nature will react in certain circumstances. A police constable came to my rooms the other day and told me he was going to report me for some trivial motor-car offence. Rather stupidly I became very angry with him, which only made him more determined to summons me. He took out his note-book and was busily taking down particulars of my remarks when I paused and, turning to him, added, 'Unfortunately you are not the type of man one can settle with outside the Court.' He stopped writing and fixed me with a look I did not at first understand. Then without a word he tore the page from his note-book and threw it on the fire.

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‘What are you doing?’ I asked.

He did not look at me again, but, putting his book back into his pocket, said, ‘I’m not going to report you.’

‘Why not?’ I asked.

‘Because I don’t want to—now.’

You see, I had unintentionally touched a chord in the man’s make-up. My reference to his integrity was worth all the kudos he might have got for reporting me. He was a man of character.

In all you do, be sure that you are courteous. Some people are dreadfully rude, but do not trouble to retaliate. By so doing you will bring yourself down to their level. They may be ill-bred or badly brought up. Do not let down your mother and me by similar behaviour.

By the same token avoid hating people. It is a sentiment of inferiority. If someone does you an injury, let it go at that and be on your guard in future. It will be such a waste of time to try and get back at him, and you will have other things to do. Do not mind his jeers. Know that you are greater than he by a display of dignity and self-control. Vindictiveness and revenge are such useless things. They smack of the vendetta which obtains only in semi-barbarous

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communities. In Corsica and in the Balkans it is still practised, but I cannot think you will want to emulate these people. Destructive of everything and productive of nothing, it is at best an appeasement for an emotional canker. Let your enemy roll in his vomit if that is his pleasure; it must have no attractions for you.

I have told you to be courageous when called upon to make decisions, but I have only told you half the story. You must also be fair, circumspect, and without prejudice. You should not act on impulse; avoid hasty judgement. Look at the proposition from every viewpoint, from the other man's as well as your own. Measure up the future consequences as well as the immediate. To allow prejudice to interfere is to make an error in judgement. These rules do not only refer to business deals, but to every aspect of life. To gain a temporary conquest will avail you nothing.

In your dealings with other people you must make an effort to be generous, kind, and unselfish. If you are made in the right mould it will give you a lot of satisfaction. When you have your suspicions about a person make sure you do not condemn him unjustly. If there is a doubt in your mind, give him the benefit of it.

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British justice is founded on this precept, and it should be taken into your private life. Be charitable, too. To give a beggar sixpence when you have a hundred pounds in your pocket is neither charitable nor generous. But, if your sole possession is a shilling, then you will be making a sacrifice. That is true, unselfish generosity.

Truth is one of those things in life that shine with inextinguishable radiance. If you are truthful you are on impregnable ground. Nothing can assail it except trickery, and that can never gain a lasting victory. The only time it is permissible to lie is when it is necessary to save someone else's feelings. Remember it is as bad to live or pretend a lie as it is to speak one. The latter brand borders on hypocrisy and insincerity, which are things to be avoided at all costs. They are the refuge of moral cowards and tricksters who live in a world of sham.

I have spoken to you of truth as a quality of inestimable beauty. There are three others which I am inclined to place in the same category—gratitude, loyalty, and friendship. They are closely allied for the purposes of my theme. I, personally, think there is no more detestable human trait than a lack of gratitude, or disloyalty to a friend or colleague. I do not know

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that I am right in placing so much importance on these things, but that is just the way I feel about it. It seems to me that if someone goes out of his or her way to do you a friendly action it is only natural that a chord is struck somewhere within you that yearns for a chance to reciprocate. Let me give you two examples.

Some years ago when I was in business I employed, amongst other people, a Jew. He was a tough, common fellow, but a likeable one. He was always in financial trouble, and on Fridays he would come to me with a hard-luck story and ask me for a small advance on his next week's earnings. On several occasions I fell for this because I thought he was a trier. Two years later, when he was no longer with me, I met him in the street. He was looking very affluent, and upon my remarking on his appearance he said, 'Yes, Mr. Mander, I'm doing nicely, thank you; but I haven't forgotten the old days. If you're ever hard up, remember that if I've got a hundred pounds you can always have fifty of it.' I was very touched indeed by this avowal because I know he spoke from his heart and meant it. He was offering to do much more than I had done for him.

On another occasion, before the War, a man

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swindled me of £200. When I threatened to have him arrested he went down on his knees and, with tears in his eyes, pleaded for his wife and child. I frightened him, but took no action.

In 1916 during the War I was in hospital in Boulogne recovering from shell-shock. One day this man turned up at the hospital as a casualty on his way to England. I was amazed to see him in the uniform of an infantry colonel. When he heard that I was also being evacuated to England, and seeing that I was still a captain, he asked me if I would care to be his adjutant; if so, he would apply for me. Although I declined his offer I appreciated it for what it was worth: it was worth a great deal.

There is one incident in my life I shall not easily forget. It occurred, also before the War, when I was married to my first wife. She was returning from a sea voyage and met on board the ship an officer in a cavalry regiment. He fell in love with her, and she, being on a voyage of convalescence, was in a receptive mood for sympathy. I realized when I met her on her return that she had become infatuated with the man. Instead of allowing my jealousy to get the better of me, I sat down and wrote him a letter, pointing out the unhappiness he would cause if

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he pursued the friendship, and begging him to have no further communication with her. He replied in a sincere manner, saying that he would most certainly respect my wishes in every way, also adding that he would like to meet me.

I lunched with him. He was charming, but we did not refer to the incident. However, I recognized a man of his word. He never saw her again.

In 1915, two years later, I was dining at a little *estaminet* in France, reserved for officers. A man sat down in a vacant place next to me, and turning, I saw my cavalry friend. He was in the uniform of a Staff Colonel and had already lost a leg. Our conversation was general, but my heart went out in gratitude and admiration for this man who had so nobly kept his word.

We now come to 1924. I was crossing to Germany shortly after being married to your mother. I had reserved a berth, but there were many people who had not, and the boat was full. We left Harwich, and wandering into the smoke-room I came across the Colonel. He was bemoaning the fact that he had nowhere to sleep. I went to the purser and told him that Colonel — was to have my berth. The latter never knew how it was that they had suddenly

swindled me of £200. When I threatened to have him arrested he went down on his knees and, with tears in his eyes, pleaded for his wife and child. I frightened him, but took no action.

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found him a cabin, but I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had, in a tiny way, repaid him for his kindness of eleven years previously. Dare I hope that he will read these lines and recognize himself?

I have now given you three examples of the sort of incidents that lift things out of the rut of life's commonplace routine. Many, many similar things have happened to me and will also happen to you. Real friendship is a golden possession. I have always had the faculty of making enemies, but fortunately they are not usually people whom I would care to admit into my friendship. I hope you will also make your enemies: a man who has none cannot be a person of much character. On the other hand, I have some intensely loyal friends who have stood by me when I most needed them. Although I started after the War with no material asset and have, I suppose, managed to make a reasonable living since, I know full well that I could not have done so without these friends, who have been so staunch and inexpressibly kind to me.

A word about alcohol. I am personally a total abstainer, and have been for the last eighteen years. This is not because I am a temperance reformer or have any prejudice against alcohol.

I stopped drinking in the middle of the War because I had got into very bad habits and would most certainly have killed myself if I had continued. I realized at the age of twenty-seven that I had either to pull up or go under.

There is no doubt that the teetotaller has a big start over the man who drinks. He is always fresh on waking up in the morning, his head is never fuddled. He saves a lot of time and endless money. But although I feel this, I do not wish to dogmatize. We often give you a sip of beer so that when you grow up you will not think it grand and manly to drink. Spirits are an acquired taste and definitely harmful in excess. Cocktails are abominable concoctions from America and will rot your inside. Avoid them, at any rate. If you must drink before dinner, then drink sherry, which is a good old-fashioned wine and cannot do you much harm. If I were you I should make it a rule not to drink anything between meals, and during meals drink only wines—claret, burgundy, and port. In moderation, these cannot do you much harm. At the same time I would point out that my father was an abstainer, I am an abstainer, and your Uncle Geoffrey is also one. Your family is therefore very temperate, and I should

think twice before you decide to be otherwise. It will not be easy. You will be asked frequently to have a drink, but after a little everyone will get to know that you are a teetotaller and they will cease asking you, as they have done in my case.

And, in conclusion, a word about Youth versus Age. Of recent years, and particularly since the War, this has become one of the major problems of life. It has been brought to a head chiefly by the fact that it was the old men who sat at home while they sent the young ones across the seas to be massacred. More than this: the old ones who did go to the War disguised as generals were for the most part hopeless failures, and were consequently responsible for the loss of tens of thousands of the country's youth.

In these circumstances you would have thought that the young people would have come into their own on their return. But this was not the case. In whatever direction you look today the old men are still holding the reins. The average age of the present Cabinet is over sixty. The Stock Exchange Committee is replete with hoary-headed individuals. Our political economists are for the most part aged knights, and the same remarks apply to the men in control of the railways, collieries, banks,

and most of the other big industrial undertakings.

This state of affairs is, of course, fantastic. Old men have old ideas and are in the minority; why should they control the majority?

There is an island in the New Hebrides group of Oceania where it is the custom for fathers to be tolerated only during such time as their sons are in the adolescent stage. As soon as the boys reach the age of nineteen or twenty, when they are strong enough to dethrone their fathers, they do so. If there is any serious resistance they either cut off their heads or poison them. This would be an excellent principle to apply to this country. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether it would obtain the necessary backing in Parliament, as politics are under the control of the old men on the Front Benches, and the youthful Back Benchers respond to them like sheep to a barking dog. Besides, you might want to do away with me!

Anyway, I should like to see you do your little bit to alter this state of affairs. By the time a man is forty he should have reached the pinnacle of his career. His faculties are sharpest and his experience as great as it ever will be, while compatible with a clear head. As long

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as the old dodderers continue to occupy high places, so long will the country flounder in reaction. See to it, young man, that something is done to rid your country of these leeches.

We have come to the end, little chap, and I, for one, am sorry. In one way it has been an easy thing, because I have had no occasion to search my brain for invention. What I have told you has come from my heart with a spontaneity born of my love for you. There have been passages, however, that have sorely taxed my judgement. I have said to myself: Shall I tell him here and now, or shall I wait till he grows older? Then I have wondered why I should be afraid to put in black and white things that I want you to know—indeed, things that every parent who cares about his boy should tell him. There is no reason at all, so I have done it in the knowledge that after all it is nobody's business except yours and mine.

In the beginning I had thought that I would indicate at the head of each chapter when I would like you first to read it. There are some that you should read when you are fifteen and others that should be left till you are older. But thinking it over, I decided to leave the decision to your own discretion—a discretion which I

know will be pronounced enough. There are passages you will not understand till you are twenty, so I should like you to read it over once again when you attain that age.

I know nothing about my father's early life, and that seems to me all wrong. If a man's life has been crammed with vicissitude like mine, then it seems a wicked thing that he should not give his son the benefit of his experience. If his life has been a steady progression to affluence and success, as I believe was the case with my father, why should his son not hear about it, so that he can, if he wishes, keep the example before him? But my father was not a writer and he died before he could tell me his story. That was my loss, and by the same token this book will surely be your gain.

May I tell you once again before I close how pleased I am with you? Shall I tell you that I was speaking to Miss Burman, your head-mistress, this morning, and she gave you a very good report?

'He's very painstaking and intelligent,' she said. 'He has charming manners and a kind nature; I think he's perhaps the sweetest little boy I've ever had to teach.'

I never thought I should have a son like that.

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What more could I ask of you? Only, perhaps, to remember that your hardest task is yet to come. Therefore, I repeat, that if somehow I am absent when most you need me, take counsel of these few pages; or, if you prefer, ask of that inner voice that you will cultivate as you grow up—that voice which answers, ‘One *does* not do that’ rather than ‘One *must* not do that.’ It is known as one’s ‘primordial æsthetic perception’, and is a safer code of ethics than any laws prescribed by mortals.

There was once a man called John Knox. He was an illustrious Reformer, one of the world’s greatest men, who lived many centuries ago. The famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, wrote this of him, summarizing Knox’s message to the world:

‘Let men know that they are men, created by God, responsible to God; who work in any meanest moment of time what will last through eternity.’

Write this out, Theo, and put it in some place where you can see it often. If you keep those lines before you, you will not easily go wrong.



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